



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
Web site: [dbedt.hawaii.gov](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov)

Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

February 6, 2026  
8:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of  
**HB1576**  
**RELATING TO FILMING**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on HB1576, which proposes to require DBEDT and its Hawai'i Film Office, to issue public notices when productions receive film permits, or enter into agreements with the department, or when productions register for or qualify for the Hawai'i Motion Picture, Digital Media, Film Production Income Tax Credit.

DBEDT recognizes the intent of this measure to increase transparency and community awareness related to film production activities across the state. One such policy already in place is the notification emails to all entertainment industry labor unions once a project has registered and their documentation of the Start of Principal Photography (SOPP) for any production participating the film tax credit program.

Specifically, productions submit a formal notification letter on the filing entity's official letterhead to the Hawai'i Film Office within DBEDT's Creative Industries Division.

This letter provides advance notice—at least seven business days prior—of the start of principal photography for a film or media production in Hawai'i and confirms receipt of required production information, including the production name, filing entity, island location, scheduled shoot dates, and the start and end dates the production will be in the state. The Creative Industries Division Tax Credit Unit currently requires productions with budgets exceeding \$1,000,000 to release this information and to acknowledge DBEDT's authority to notify applicable Hawai'i-based entertainment industry labor unions, including IATSE Local 665, Teamsters Local 996, SAG-AFTRA, and, if applicable, IBEW, of the project's production start date.

The additional layer of the community notification as written in the measure, is intended to notify the public for all film permit issues by the Hawai'i Film Office. We recognize the intent may be to provide information to the community-at-large in order to inform and foster positive relationships between the film industry, residents, and local stakeholders. Film permits can number in the thousands annually.

Because it is not an industry best practice to provide public notice of film productions as part of the film permit application process, DBEDT has a concern that the requirement as proposed could be a dis-incentive to attract new production business to Hawai'i.

The Office of the Attorney General has reviewed the proposed legislation and stated proposals could create potential privacy, confidentiality, and safety considerations, primarily depending on how "designated representative" is defined and the operational implications of publicly releasing detailed filming information.

In addition, DBEDT notes that the proposal will create new and significant administrative responsibilities for the department, the Hawai'i Film Office (HFO), Tax Credit Unit (TCU), and Creative Industries Division (CID), all of which are currently operating with limited staffing and resources.

Under the measure, DBEDT would be required to prepare, publish, and manage public notices for qualifying productions, maintain online postings, and administer opt-in email and postal notification systems. In addition, the department anticipates an increase in public inquiries and requests for information, as well as the need to coordinate outreach efforts with impacted communities and partner organizations.

To implement these requirements effectively, additional staffing and funding will be necessary. This includes resources to update and maintain the Hawai'i Film Tax Credit Portal, update the Hawai'i Film Office website, and support the ongoing administrative and technical functions required to ensure timely, accurate, and compliant public notifications.

Absent additional resources, DBEDT is concerned that the requirements of this measure could result in operational delays, compliance challenges, and a reduced capacity to deliver core services that support Hawai'i's film and creative industries.

The film industry, an anchor of Hawai'i's creative economy, is a key component of the state's economic diversification strategy and provides meaningful employment opportunities for local residents.

DBEDT looks forward to working collaboratively with the Legislature, industry partners, and community stakeholders to refine the measure in a way that advances transparency goals while ensuring that implementation is practical, sustainable, and appropriately resourced.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**State of Hawai'i  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State House of Representatives  
Committee on Economic Development and Technology (ECD)**

**Friday, February 6, 2026  
8:30 AM – Room 423, HI State Capitol**

**TESTIMONY IN **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1567**  
RELATING TO TAXATION**

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo, Representative Ilagan, for scheduling HB 1567 and allowing us to testify on this measure. The Hawai'i Film Alliance (HFA) submits this testimony in **support of HB 1567**.

HFA is a member-based organization comprised of over 600 Hawai'i film and television professionals, entertainment union members, creative workers, production companies, small businesses, and allied industry partners who live and work in the State of Hawai'i. Our members span the full spectrum of production including crew, talent, producers, and business owners.

HB 1576 ensures that when a production obtains a permit, enters into a filming agreement with DBEDT, or registers for pre-qualification for the state's film tax credit, clear notice is made publicly available and posted on a readily accessible part of the department's website. It also allows members of the community to sign up to receive these notifications by email or mail.

Open, advance notification strengthens community engagement around filming activity by giving residents, businesses, and cultural practitioners timely information about where and when productions will occur. It helps ensure that community voices are heard and that potential impacts on neighborhoods, natural areas, and cultural sites are considered. At the same time, this transparency supports the film industry by building greater trust between production teams and the communities they engage with.

In a state as diverse as Hawai'i, where filming spans urban centers, rural areas, beaches, forests, and sacred cultural places, clear communication about upcoming production work benefits everyone. Greater transparency allows residents to plan for temporary changes in access or traffic, supports local businesses in preparing for production-related demand, and fosters stronger partnerships between filmmakers and Hawai'i communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. **HFA SUPPORTS HB 1567**.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:27:24 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ricardo Galindez	Island Film Group	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Island Film Group is testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1576

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 1:08:26 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:46:00 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Wakukawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support transparency around this process.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:28:16 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Genaro Hale Gualdarama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of bill HB1576.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:43:10 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel Hamilton-Lowe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a member of the Directors Guild of America and I support HB 1576 in solidarity with my local 996 coworkers.

Having a notification system in place allows local unions to negotiate for local workers as non-studio projects plan to shoot in Hawai‘i.

This system exists in other states and is easy to implement.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:55:58 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Salanoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ilagan,

My name is John Salanoa and I stand in support of bill HB1576

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:18:27 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keith Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a member of the Director's Guild of America who lives and works here on Oahu, I support HB1576 in solidarity with our 996 Teamsters.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:25:25 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eric Uyeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 1576, WITH AMENDMENTS

Relating to Filming; Public Notice Requirements

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony in support of H.B. 1576, with amendments.

While transparency and community awareness are important goals, the bill as currently drafted introduces operational, safety, and competitive risks that could discourage productions from filming in Hawai'i without meaningfully improving public outcomes.

Good policy should increase trust without increasing friction.

As written, this bill does the opposite.

KEY CONCERNS & RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

1. Public Disclosure of Production Contact Information Is a Safety Risk

H.B. 1576 requires DBEDT to publicly disclose direct contact information for a production's designated representative, including phone number, email, and physical mailing address.

Problem:

- Production offices routinely handle crowd control, security, and sensitive locations
- Public posting of direct contact info exposes crews to harassment, disruption, and safety threats
- No other major production jurisdiction requires this level of disclosure

Amendment Recommendation:

Replace direct contact details with a DBEDT-managed contact portal or form

Limit public-facing information to production name and general filming area, not personal or operational contact details

## 2. Mandatory Public Notice at Pre-Qualification Stage Is Premature

The bill requires public notice as early as tax credit pre-registration, before a production is fully financed or greenlit.

Problem:

- Many projects never move forward after pre-qualification
- Premature disclosure can spook investors, trigger misinformation, or create political pressure before a project exists
- Hawai‘i would become an outlier compared to other incentive jurisdictions

Amendment Recommendation:

Delay public notice until final certification or permit issuance, not pre-qualification

Alternatively, aggregate notices quarterly rather than real-time disclosure

## 3. Real-Time Posting Creates Competitive Disadvantage

Requiring publication within five business days places Hawai‘i at a disadvantage.

Problem:

- Competing jurisdictions protect early-stage project confidentiality
- Producers may choose locations where development details remain private until contracts are finalized
- This risks pushing productions elsewhere without increasing local benefit

Amendment Recommendation:

Extend notice timelines or allow post-production or annual summary reporting

Focus transparency on outcomes, not early process steps

#### 4. Public Notice Does Not Equal Public Benefit

The bill assumes that public disclosure alone improves accountability.

Problem:

- Posting names and emails does not improve workforce development, vendor access, or ROI
- It may instead generate confusion, complaints, or misuse of contact channels
- Transparency should serve measurable outcomes, not create new administrative burdens

Amendment Recommendation:

Redirect transparency toward annual aggregated reports showing:

- Local hire totals
- Local vendor spend
- Island-by-island economic impact

This informs the public without disrupting production operations.

#### 5. Annual Notice Limitation Conflicts With Real Production Cycles

The bill limits notice to once per year per production, even though productions may evolve across phases, locations, and permits.

Problem:

- Creates ambiguity and compliance confusion
- Risks accidental non-compliance for episodic or returning productions

Amendment Recommendation:

Clarify that a single notice applies per certified production cycle, not calendar year

Align definitions with existing film permitting and tax credit timelines

**BIGGER ISSUE: PERCEPTION VS REALITY**

Hawai'i already has:

- Film permits
- Tax credit certification
- Legislative reporting
- Public audits and budget oversight

Adding real-time public exposure does not improve accountability — it changes the risk profile of filming here.

Productions are not hiding; they are budgeting.

## CONCLUSION

H.B. 1576 is well-intentioned, but without amendments it risks chilling production activity, exposing crews to unnecessary risk, and reducing Hawai‘i’s competitiveness, all without delivering measurable public benefit.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass this bill with amendments that:

- Protect safety and confidentiality
- Delay disclosure until appropriate milestones
- Focus transparency on outcomes, not process
- Keep Hawai‘i aligned with national best practices

Transparency should strengthen Hawai‘i’s film industry — not scare it away.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:11:00 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patrick Ah Loy	IATSE 665	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Patrick Ah Loy, I've worked in the industry for 17 years. I stand on my written testimony in support of HB1576 Thank you for the opportunity to testify"*

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:12:24 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joshua Meredith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Joshua J. Meredith. I'm a member of IATSE Local 665, the union representing technicians and artisans in the entertainment industry in Hawai'i. I strongly support HB 1576.

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:14:00 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

**HB-1576**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 4:30:08 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeff Juett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: