

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

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, April 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
SB2578, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB2578, SD1, HD1, which establishes a Hawai'i Film Commission and modernizes the State's governance structure for film, television, and digital media production. This measure is a critical step in aligning Hawai'i with global best practices in media industry development and ensuring that the State can compete in a rapidly evolving production economy.

Around the world, leading production jurisdictions have moved beyond traditional "film offices" and now operate through film commissions or media authorities that integrate:

- Incentive administration
- Studio and infrastructure development
- Workforce pipelines
- Public-private partnerships
- International marketing and co-production strategy

This structure exists because film is no longer simply an arts activity, it is a capital-intensive economic sector that requires coordinated governance. Examples include:

- California Film Commission – Administers incentives and coordinates large-scale production strategy statewide.

- Georgia Film Office – A key driver behind Georgia’s emergence as a global production hub through centralized incentive administration and industry coordination.
- New York State Governor’s Office of Motion Picture & Television Development – Integrates incentives, studio growth, and workforce policy.
- New Zealand Film Commission – National body coordinating incentives, workforce, and global production attraction alongside infrastructure growth.
- British Film Commission (under the UK’s BFI) – Centralized authority supporting inward investment, studio expansion, and international productions.
- Screen Australia – National commission integrating grants, development funding, industry growth, and export.

These jurisdictions have demonstrated that institutional structure matters. Production follows not just incentives, but certainty, speed, infrastructure, and governance capacity.

SB2578, SD1, HD1 brings Hawai’i into alignment with this global model.

Film and digital media production now involves:

- Multi-million to multi-billion-dollar infrastructure investments
- Studio campuses and soundstage development
- Virtual production and post-production facilities
- AI-enabled production workflows
- Long-term workforce pipelines tied to education and credentialing

These are asset-driven economic development activities. They require an entity with authority to:

- Enter into public-private partnerships
- Manage and activate state-owned production facilities
- Administer grants and development funds
- Coordinate statewide permitting and industry engagement

SB2578, SD1, HD1 explicitly grants these authorities to the Hawai’i Film Commission, including P3 agreements for studios, sound stages, post-production, and creative technology infrastructure.

A traditional program housed within a broader division is not structured to execute at this scale or speed. A commission provides:

- Dedicated governance
- Industry expertise on the board

- Operational flexibility
- Clear accountability through annual reporting

The Legislature has already recognized that high-impact industries require dedicated authorities or corporations, not general program administration. Examples include:

- Agriculture sector entities
- Housing finance and development corporations
- Technology and innovation development corporations
- Tourism and destination management authorities

These structures exist because those industries require:

- Asset development
- Financing and partnerships
- Market-driven responsiveness
- Industry-specific governance

Film and digital media now sit at that same level of economic significance. SB2578, SD1, HD1 provides the same structural maturity for this sector.

As outlined in the State's media strategy blueprint, Hawai'i has:

- World-class locations
- Strong brand value
- Emerging workforce pipelines

But faces structural gaps:

- Limited soundstage and post-production capacity
- Shallow senior crew base
- Competition from jurisdictions with stronger governance and infrastructure models
- A production incentive system constrained by administrative capacity rather than strategy

Without modernization, productions will continue to migrate to jurisdictions where institutional readiness matches industry needs. The proposed Commission directly addresses these structural gaps.

SB2578, SD1, HD1 also embeds workforce strategy into the Commission's duties, including:

- K-12 pathways

- Postsecondary and credential-based training
- Upskilling in AI, virtual production, and digital workflows

This aligns with the statewide curriculum-to-career approach needed to convert production activity into long-term resident employment and industry growth.

The bill maintains strong public accountability through:

- Annual reporting to the Legislature
- Incentive reporting
- Grant reporting
- Public-private partnership disclosure
- Workforce outcome reporting

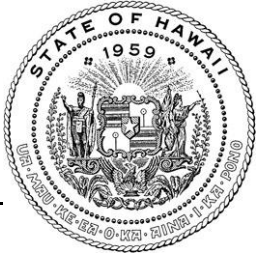
This ensures the Commission operates as an economic development authority with legislative oversight, not an isolated entity.

SB2578, SD1, HD1 is not simply an organizational change. It is a structural modernization that:

- Aligns Hawai'i with global film industry governance best practices
- Enables infrastructure and asset development
- Strengthens workforce pipelines
- Provides the institutional capacity required to compete internationally
- Treats the film and digital media sector with the same seriousness as other legislatively prioritized industries

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2578, SD1, HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



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Statement of
GEORJA SKINNER
Division Chief, Creative Industries Division
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, April 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
SB2578, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports SB2578 SD1 HD1, which creates a Hawai'i Film Commission attached to the department. As proposed, the measure establishes a film fund, adds leadership positions exempt from Chapter 76, transfers Hawai'i film office functions and its civil service positions to the commission and maintains the film permitting functions as noted in chapter 201-14 HRS, separates film sector oversight and development from the creative industries framework, restructures funding flows, strengthens governance and reporting, establishes a new source of funding to attract productions, and adds responsibilities for workforce development, and development of production industry infrastructure.

We support the intent of many aspects of SB2578 SD1 HD1, which seeks to evolve Hawai'i's film industry governance as part of the maturity of this industry cluster. Through establishing a Hawai'i Film Commission comprised of industry and government leaders, the scope and duties of this body will look at a broader ecosystem development

approach to include workforce initiatives, facilities development and management, business attraction, grants for film projects and industry development.

As the global production industry evolves, an encompassing commission structure as proposed in SB2578 SD1 is timely and necessary. Massive consolidation of media corporations in film, television, streaming and other media industries are going through a seismic shift, with new business models evolving at an unprecedented pace.

CID welcomes the opportunity to work with lawmakers to refine language to ensure the vision is aligned, properly resourced, and has operational clarity which includes ethical safeguards when granting the commission its authority:

Funding & Grant Viability

The newly proposed Film Industry Development Special Fund appears primarily reliant on the 0.2% tax credit processing fee, which generated \$68,519 (2023) and \$75,916 (2024). Given the scope and general areas of responsibility for the commission and staff, clarification is needed on whether additional appropriations are planned, and whether projected revenues are sufficient to support meaningful grant and workforce programs. Statutory language regarding where these funds are deposited must be reconciled.

HRS 201-113 Hawai'i Creative and Media Industries Development Fund

We support the need for separating out the term “film” from the existing statute to focus on all film industry solely under the new fund as proposed in this measure. As a core strategic pillar of the division strategic framework to build a viable export industry for the state, the media cluster we request remains as a core purpose of the original fund as intended. While the funding resources derived from the 0.2% are slated to be removed as a resource for HRS 201-113, we will continue to provide seed capital for media, music, design and other emerging clusters in creative sectors, advancing our global export capacity of intellectual property through regional entrepreneurial development.

Grant Program Design & Fiscal Safeguards

We recommend that the film grants focus on mid-to-large productions with clear eligibility thresholds, award caps, transparent scoring, and milestone-based payments are essential, along with claw back and audit protections. We recommend that the management of the grants is separated from management of the tax compliance and incentives program, which would remain in DBEDT as proposed this session.

Tax Credit & Grant Overlap

Clarification is needed on whether productions may receive both tax credits and grants. If allowed, stacking limits and priority rules must be established.

Tax Credit Cap Authority

Authority to waive or modify per-production caps should be limited strictly to cap waivers, not base rate changes.

Implementation & Oversight

With staffing delayed until December 31, 2027, strong transparency and reporting safeguards are needed to prevent operational disruption.

CID sees SB2578 SD1 HD1 as a catalyst which has the potential to advance our film industry, accelerate strategic business development, expand our workforce and facilities development through a structure which is properly resourced and staffed and meets the needs of a rapidly changing industry - for today and tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: NET INCOME, Establish Hawaii Film Commission to Administer Production Tax Credit and Modify Ceilings

BILL NUMBER: SB 2578 HD1

INTRODUCED BY: ECD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Hawai'i Film Commission within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and transfers the rights, powers, functions, and duties of the Hawai'i Film Office to the Commission. Requires appointments and hiring of staff by 12/31/2027. Establishes the Film Industry Development Special Fund. Excludes media and film from the definition of "creative industries" and renames the Hawai'i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund as the Hawai'i Creative Industries Development Special Fund. Amends the sources of moneys to be deposited into the Hawai'i Creative Industries Development Special Fund. Allows the Creative Industries Development Special Fund to be used for the support and development of facilities and other initiatives to grow the State's creative industries. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new part to Chapter 201, HRS, to establish the Hawaii Film Commission and amends various provisions in Chapter 201 to transfer many of the functions of the existing Hawaii Film Office to it.

In particular, new section 201-E states that the Commission is to, among other things, (1) administer the motion picture, digital media, and film production tax credits pursuant to section 235-17, including application intake, review, registration, certification, compliance monitoring, and reporting; and (2) review and determine whether to waive or modify the maximum total motion picture, digital media, and film production tax credits per qualified production pursuant to criteria and procedures adopted by the commission by rule or formal action.

A new section 201-F establishes the film industry development special fund into which the section 235-17 film production income tax credits shall be deposited. Makes a conforming amendment to section 235-17, HRS.

Amends section 235-17(*l*) to allow the newly established Hawaii film commission to waive or modify the \$17,000,000 maximum tax credits per qualified production,

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 3000

STAFF COMMENTS: The production credit in HRS section 235-17 was enacted as Act 107, SLH 1997, as a percentage of the costs incurred in the State in the production of motion picture or television films. As enacted, the credit was 4% of regular production costs plus 6% of

transient accommodations, mirroring the GET and TAT rates at the time. Act 156, SLH 1988, raised the TAT credit to 7.25% while also raising the TAT rate to 7.25%.

After a period where this credit took a back seat to the qualified high tech business program enacted by Act 221, SLH 2001, this credit was next amended by Act 88, SLH 2006, which added credits for digital media and replaced the GET and TAT bifurcation with a unified credit of 15% of qualified production costs incurred in the C&C of Honolulu and 20% in any other county. The act added a per-production cap of \$8 million and sunset the credit on Jan. 1, 2016.

Act 89, SLH 2013, changed the credit percentages to 20% in Honolulu and 25% in any other county; raised the per-production limit to \$15 million; and extended the sunset date to Jan. 1, 2019.

Act 143, SLH 2017, extended the sunset date for the credit to Jan. 1, 2026, and first imposed an aggregate cap of \$35 million. Act 275, SLH 2019, raised the aggregate cap to \$50 million.

Act 217, SLH 2022, increased the credit percentages to 22% in Honolulu and 27% in any other county and extended the sunset date to January 1, 2033.

We in Hawaii have had our production credit since 1997, so it's been more than twenty years. Have there been any studies about what the program has done for Hawaii's economy or Hawaii's tax revenue? Certainly, the film industry promises increased opportunities. Some of them certainly have materialized. The Motion Picture Association, for example, claims 4 films and 9 TV series were filmed in Hawaii in 2023, and 4 films and 9 TV series in 2024, resulting in 8,170+ jobs and \$259.3+ million in wages in the state. See <https://www.-motionpictures.org/advocacy/driving-local-economies/#map>.

This bill takes one of the guardrails the Legislature enacted, the (current) per-production cap of \$17 million, and effectively tosses it out the window. Yes, the cap is still there, but this new agency called the Commission is given the power to raise or lower the cap, or waive it altogether, pursuant to standards that *it* is going to set. To keep any semblance of normalcy, the bill should be amended to include standards and criteria for raising, lowering, or waiving the cap to be sure that our elected policymakers are running the show and that our executive agencies are working off that script.

Digested: 3/31/2026

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

In Support of

SB2578

Relating to the Establishment of the Hawai'i Film Commission and the Film Industry Development Special Fund

Submitted to: House Finance Committee

Hearing Date: April 2, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT**

Submitted by: Ruben Carrillo

Founder, Carrillo Digital Inc | Camera Operator, Film & Television Industry

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Finance Committee: My name is Ruben Carrillo. I am pleased to submit this written testimony in strong support of SB2578. I want to sincerely thank the Committee for scheduling this hearing and for the Legislature's steadfast commitment to building a lasting foundation for Hawai'i's film, television, and digital media industry. The work being done this session to strengthen the structural support for our industry is as important as any tax incentive, and SB2578 reflects exactly the kind of long-term thinking our industry needs.

My Background and Investment in This Industry

I bring more than 38 years of professional experience in the entertainment industry to this testimony. Throughout my career, I have worked as a camera operator on feature films and episodic television productions, contributing to projects that have brought Hawai'i to screens around the world. I have worked alongside union and non-union crews, collaborated with studios and independent producers, and navigated the full range of production environments this industry offers.

I am also the founder of Carrillo Digital Inc, a production company based here in Hawai'i. From this vantage point — as both a working industry professional and a business owner rooted in this community — I have watched our industry struggle with a persistent challenge: the absence of a dedicated, empowered institutional voice to advocate for, coordinate, and grow film and television production in our state. SB2578 directly addresses that gap.

Why a Dedicated Film Commission Matters

SB2578 establishes the Hawai'i Film Commission within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, transferring to it the rights, powers, functions, and duties currently held by the Hawaii Film Office. This is not merely a name change — it is an elevation. A dedicated Commission provides the institutional structure, the credibility, and the independence necessary to effectively recruit major productions, coordinate permitting across state agencies, and serve as a true industry partner.

In my experience, productions make location decisions quickly and based on very practical criteria: How easy is it to work here? Who is my point of contact? Can I get answers fast? A well-resourced, properly structured Film Commission can answer those questions with confidence and speed. Every other competitive production destination — Georgia, New Mexico, New York, British Columbia — has a robust commission structure. SB2578 puts Hawai‘i in that company.

The Importance of a Dedicated Film Industry Fund

Equally important is SB2578’s creation of the Film Industry Development Special Fund — a dedicated funding stream for film and media, separate from the broader Hawaii Creative Industries Development Special Fund. This separation matters enormously. Film and television production is a capital-intensive, highly competitive industry with specific infrastructure needs, workforce development requirements, and marketing demands that differ substantially from other creative sectors.

When film and media must compete for funding within a broad “creative industries” bucket alongside arts, music, design, and other disciplines, the result is often an underfunded industry that cannot do what it needs to do to attract productions and develop local talent. A dedicated fund signals to the industry — locally and nationally — that Hawai‘i is serious about film and television as a distinct economic sector deserving its own investment strategy.

The Impact on Local Professionals and Small Businesses

As the founder of a Hawaii-based production company, I know firsthand that the success of our industry is not measured only by the number of studio productions that come through. It is measured by whether local crew members can build sustainable careers here; whether small production companies like Carrillo Digital Inc can compete for regional and national projects; and whether the infrastructure — equipment houses, post-production facilities, location services, catering, transportation — that supports every production can grow and remain viable.

A strong, properly resourced Film Commission with a dedicated funding source is the backbone that makes all of that possible. It is the institution that connects local vendors to incoming productions, that invests in workforce training, that promotes Hawai‘i on the national and international stage. After nearly four decades in this business, I can say with certainty: the places that have built their industries to last all did so by investing in exactly this kind of institutional infrastructure.

Conclusion

SB2578 is a foundational investment in the future of Hawai‘i’s film and television industry. By establishing a dedicated Film Commission and a separate Film

Industry Development Special Fund, this bill creates the institutional framework our industry needs to compete, to grow, and to deliver lasting economic and cultural benefits to the people of our state.

Speaking as an individual with 38 years in this industry and as the founder of a Hawai'i-based production company, I urge the House Finance Committee to pass SB2578. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to building a stronger creative economy for Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruben Carrillo

Founder, Carrillo Digital Inc

Camera Operator, Feature Film & Episodic Television

38+ Years in the Entertainment Industry

rsc.carrillo@gmail.com

SIGHT & SOUND

PRODUCTIONS

Sight & Sound Productions strongly supports SB 2578 (HD1) and appreciates the Legislature's forward looking approach to modernizing Hawai'i's film industry infrastructure, governance, and long term development strategy.

SB 2578 (HD1) takes a significant step by establishing the Hawai'i Film Commission within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and granting it clear, centralized authority over film and television production activities in the State, including incentive administration, workforce initiatives, and facility development . Creating a dedicated commission with this level of responsibility aligns Hawai'i with other leading production jurisdictions and will improve coordination, efficiency, and strategic planning.

The bill thoughtfully outlines a commission structure that includes industry, county, workforce, and cultural representation. This ensures that decision making reflects the full scope of Hawai'i's film ecosystem, from local labor and producers to infrastructure development and indigenous storytelling.

SB 2578 (HD1) also establishes the Film Industry Development Special Fund, with dedicated revenue streams including fees from the motion picture tax credit program . This is a critical component for building a sustainable industry, as it creates a reliable funding source for production incentives, workforce training, infrastructure, and industry promotion. The ability to support public private partnerships for studios, sound stages, and post production facilities is especially important as Hawai'i seeks to expand its production capacity.

The bill further strengthens the State's long term competitiveness by explicitly prioritizing workforce development, including K-12 pathways, postsecondary training, and upskilling in emerging technologies such as virtual production and artificial intelligence . These investments are essential to ensuring that local residents can participate in and benefit from the growth of the industry.

In addition, SB 2578 (HD1) provides the commission with the authority to administer and, where appropriate, modify or waive per production tax credit caps based on established criteria. This flexibility allows Hawai'i to compete for large scale, high impact productions while maintaining oversight and accountability.

The measure also clarifies and separates the State's support for film and broader creative industries by removing film from the definition of "creative industries" and restructuring the associated special fund. This ensures that both sectors receive more targeted and effective support based on their distinct needs.

Finally, the bill requires annual reporting to the Legislature, ensuring transparency, accountability, and ongoing evaluation of the program's outcomes, including incentives awarded, workforce development progress, and overall industry competitiveness.

As a Hawai'i based production company, Sight & Sound Productions sees firsthand the importance of strong institutional support, modern infrastructure, and a well trained local workforce. SB 2578 (HD1) establishes the framework necessary for Hawai'i to compete globally while creating meaningful opportunities for local businesses and residents.

For these reasons, Sight & Sound Productions respectfully urges support for SB 2578 (HD1).

Mahalo for your consideration,
Sight & Sound Productions



Statement of
Todd J. Robertson
President/CEO
Hyperspective
before the House Committee on Finance

In Support of SB2578 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FILM COMMISSION

Members of the Committee:

My name is Todd J. Robertson, President and CEO of Hyperspective Studios, Inc. On behalf of Hyperspective, I **strongly support SB2578 SD1 HD1**.

This bill takes an important step toward strengthening Hawai'i's film industry by establishing a dedicated Hawai'i Film Commission within DBEDT and creating a Film Industry Development Special Fund.

A focused body and dedicated funding mechanism will help support long-term planning, better coordination, workforce development, and the infrastructure needed to grow this industry in a more strategic and sustained way.

SB2578 SD1 HD1 is a smart investment in the long-term success of Hawai'i's film sector. It will help create stronger industry coordination and a more solid foundation for future growth. I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Todd J. Robertson
President/CEO
Hyperspective Studios, Inc.

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SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 6:19:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Makue	Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Standing in Strong Support of Bill SB 2578.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:09:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tavesi Augafa	Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Standing in support of bill SB 2578 and same with bill SB 2580.

Mahalo.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:35:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felipe Anguiano	Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Standing in strong Support of SB 2578

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:23:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin K. Holu	Hawaii Teamsters 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support of SBb 2580

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:44:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genaro Hale Gualdarama	Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the committee.

Hawaii Teamsters Local 996 stand in strong support of bill SB 2578.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 12:53:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tyler Young	Tyler Young Films, LLC.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT of SB2578 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Those of us in the film and television production community are grateful for your continued support of our industry, and for continuing to pass legislation to keep Hawai‘i competitive as a premier location for international productions. I am writing in strong support of SB2578 SD1 HD1.

Over the last 25 years, I have produced 450 different productions for the film & television industry worldwide. As a Creative Producer, Line Producer, and Unit Production Manager, I am responsible for building and managing budgets, hiring local crew and vendors, and bidding projects to streamers, networks, and productions companies. Having a strong Film Commission that offers deeper support to Producers like me, and ultimately to productions we serve, factors in to a decision to film within Hawai‘i or not. A more robust Film Commission as proposed in SB 2578 SD1 HD1 is a welcome addition to our industry.

I urge you to pass SB2578 SD1 HD1, and to work closely with DBEDT, CID, and our current Film Commission leaders to adjust the language as needed within the measure to best match its intent.

Mahalo,

Tyler Young

Creative Producer

Tyler Young Films LLC.

Honolulu, Hawaii

State of Hawai'i
The Thirty-Third Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Department of Finance (FIN)

Thursday, April 2, 2026
2PM – Room 308, HI State Capitol

COMMENTS REGARDING SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1
RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony for **SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1 with COMMENTS**.

The Hawai'i Film Alliance (HFA) is a member-based organization comprised of 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 the production ecosystem that enables films to operate locally.

HFA supports the intent behind this measure which creates a statutory Hawai'i Film Commission, transferring existing film office duties into a dedicated governance structure, and establishing a Film Industry Development Special Fund to support incentives, workforce development, industry promotion and infrastructure.

Film production is no longer “just arts.” It is a capital-intensive sector tied to infrastructure, permitting speed, workforce pipelines and public-private partnerships. Other jurisdictions use commissions or media authorities to integrate these functions, and that governance capacity and certainty determine where production goes.

In an increasingly competitive global environment, jurisdictions are modernizing their film support systems by creating integrated authorities that can respond efficiently to industry needs, invest in next generation technologies and align workforce development with emerging modes of content creation. SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1 presents an opportunity for Hawai'i to strengthen its economic development strategy by improving coordination, accountability, and operational efficiency within this sector.

At the same time, SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1 needs targeted amendments to become a workable, accountable modernization rather than a symbolic vehicle.



To minimize disruption during active production and ongoing operations, HFA respectfully offers the following considerations as this measure advances:

1. That consideration be taken regarding the existing film office staff and preserving institutional knowledge and operational continuity be a priority.
2. That clarification on who does what in administering the film tax credit under HRS 235.17 is provided so roles and responsibilities of staff and commissioners are clear.
3. That the permitting system be streamlined across all government properties in a consistent and equitable manner to reduce delays and improve cost predictability for productions.
4. That the ability to waive or modify the \$17M per production cap comes with parameters, guardrails and transparency. We urge the Legislature to require criteria such as local hire targets, workforce investments, minimum in-state spend thresholds and public reporting on waiver decisions and their impact on the annual cap distribution.
5. That representation for labor unions be increased to ensure workplace perspectives are represented and transparent. Those labor union film commission members shall be the heads of their locals as ex officio members with voting rights. They should be Hawai'i residents and members in good standing of the following entertainment industry unions: IATSE Local 665, SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i, Hawai'i Teamsters Local 996, American Federation of Musicians Local 677, Directors Guild of America, Writers Guild of America (East and West), and the Producers Guild of America, some of which maintain offices in Hawai'i.
6. That the county film office commissioners be ex officio members with voting rights.
7. That should the role of the Hawai'i Film Commission extend beyond an advisory capacity, commission members and/or staff be compensated fairly in recognition of their responsibilities and contributions.

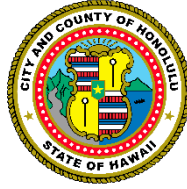
With these considerations, SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1 can enhance Hawai'i's economic development goals by strengthening a high-value, export-oriented industry that supports local jobs, small businesses, and workforce development statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure. Please consider implementing the above **AMENDMENTS BEFORE PASSING SB 2578 SD 1 HD 1.**

HONOLULU FILM OFFICE
KE KE'ENA LĪPINE O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

530 SOUTH KING ST, ROOM 306 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-6100 • FAX: WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/film-office

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



WALEA L. CONSTANTINAU
FILM COMMISSIONER
Kominina Līpine

Testimony of Walea Constantinau,
Film Commissioner, Honolulu Film Office
City and County of Honolulu

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

April 2, 2026 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference

RE: SB 2578 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO FILM INDUSTRY – COMMENTS

Dear Chair Todd, Vice-chair Takenouchi and members of the committees:

The Honolulu Film Office would like to thank the Legislators for being so supportive over the years, investing your time and mana'o to gain insights and an understanding of the needs of the industry and the significant economic benefits that the film industry brings to Hawai'i.

We request a technical amendment to address inadvertent conflicts on page 5 where the county film office representatives are listed as part of the ten voting members (lines 8-11). However, on page 6 line 1, they are not allowed to serve consecutive four-year terms.

it would mean that there would be no county representation at the end of the four year term and additionally, there would be a gap of four years before they would be able to rejoin the board.

The film office workers in each county are either appointed by their Mayors or are civil servants. They are largely one-person offices and serve as the chief industry liaison for the county, and usually serve more than four years in their respective positions. As such we respectfully request that similar to other government employees on the commission, the county film commissioners be deemed *ex officio* voting members. Alternatively, having the the four-year term limitation language start on Page 5, line 12 would address the conflict.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



April 1, 2026

Committee on Finance
Chair Todd
Vice Chair Takenouchi

The House of Representatives
The Thirty-Third Legislature
Regular Session of 2026

[RE: SB 2578 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY.](#)

DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2026

TIME: 2:00 pm

PLACE: Conference Room 308

State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu HI

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer **comments** on [SB 2578 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY.](#)

SAG-AFTRA represents over 160,000 actors, recording artists, and media professionals nationwide and over 1400 in Hawai'i. We are the professional performers working in front of the camera and behind the microphone. The SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local has a long-standing history of protecting performers in all areas of the entertainment, advertising, and media industries.

The film and television/digital media industry is too economically important, logistically complex, and globally far reaching to not have a film commission. This is an idea that is long overdue. Creating a film commission will go a long way to ensuring transparency, fair play, and effectiveness.

A dedicated film commission provides the necessary industry expertise the state needs to provide stability in our film industry. The proposed board structure, which includes representatives from labor, global production, and indigenous storytelling, ensures that the state's strategy is informed by actual practitioners and cultural stewards.

Mericia Palma Elmore, JD/MLSc
Executive Director
SAG-AFTRA Hawaii Local
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SCREEN ACTORS GUILD - AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS
SAGAFTRA.org
Associated Actors & Artistes of America / AFL-CIO



While we recognize the vital importance of establishing the Commission, we respectfully defer to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) regarding the specific administrative and fiscal restructuring proposed in the measure.

We believe DBEDT is best positioned to comment on the operational feasibility of these transfers, the fiscal impact of diverting fees between special funds, and the internal logistical requirements of transitioning the Hawaii Film Office's duties to the new Commission.

We are grateful for the legislature's continued support of our industry. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our offices for more information on how this measure impacts our members, your constituents.

Respectfully,

Mericia Palma Elmore, Executive Director SAG-AFTRA Hawaii Local

Mericia Palma Elmore, JD/MLSc
Executive Director
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SCREEN ACTORS GUILD - AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS
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Directors Guild of America, Inc.



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SAHAR MORIDANI

GENERAL COUNSEL
DAVID B. DREYFUS

April 1st, 2026

Hawai'i House of Representatives

Hearing of the Committee on Finance

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Directors Guild of America, I write in *support* of SB 2580 THE MOTION PICTURE, DIGITAL MEDIA, AND FILM PRODUCTION INCOME TAX CREDIT. This investment in our industry and its many working families who make their home in Hawai'i will provide a foundation for sustainable careers and economic opportunity.

The local Film & TV industry of Hawai'i has struggled to compete as other states and foreign countries lure production away with larger and more effective incentive programs. The updates included in SB 2580 will help us remain competitive and will protect the middle-class jobs that are so vital to the local economy. By increasing the allocation percentage, raising the aggregate cap, expanding the definition of "qualified productions" and extending the bill to 2038, you have made a commitment to bringing this work back.

Directors and their teams have been through an incredibly challenging period in recent years as local production has declined and they have struggled to maintain their livelihood as well as their health benefits— these important reforms will help ensure they can continue to find work locally and not be forced to choose between staying in Hawai'i or going elsewhere in order to stay in the entertainment industry. To that effect, the DGA would support an amendment to SB 2580 that adds an uplift to the incentive to encourage local hiring.

I am also aware that you will be considering SB 2578 RELATING TO THE FILM INDUSTRY. As a general rule, the DGA believes that having a formal Film Commission, as well as representatives from across all interested parties, including Labor, Production, and Indigenous Communities, ensures that the state can collaborate with key stakeholders to support this important driver of local employment and economic stability.

We are extremely proud of our members contributions to the Hawai'i film industry and are grateful for the support from the legislature and our local leaders. We look forward to the passage of SB 2580 and the positive impact it will have.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Rhine
Associate Executive Director

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:26:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Asher Morgado	Hawai'i film alliance	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Asher Morgado. I am 19 years old, born and raised in Hawai'i, and I am an actor and aspiring film director.

I am writing in strong support of SB2578 because I believe in building a future for Hawai'i where young people like me can grow, create, and thrive right here at home. As someone pursuing a career in the creative industry, I see firsthand how important it is for our state to invest in opportunities that uplift local talent, strengthen our communities, and create pathways for success.

Too often, many of us feel like we have to leave Hawai'i to chase our dreams. Supporting this bill is a step toward changing that reality. It shows that Hawai'i believes in its people, its stories, and its future.

I want to be part of a generation that not only represents Hawai'i to the world, but also builds something meaningful here for the next generation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Thank you Legislation for scheduling this bill and for your continual support of Hawaii's Film Industry.

Respectfully,

Asher Morgado

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:20:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Rosner	Hawaii Media Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

My name is Danny Rosner. I am president of Hawai'i Media Inc., which is the largest provider of Production, Camera, Lighting and Grip equipment in the state of Hawai'i since 1992. Also, I have been a member of IATSE Local 665, the union representing technicians and artisans in the entertainment industry in Hawai'i since 1981.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2578 relating to the film industry.

I want to thank the entire legislature for their efforts during this session to support and enhance the production income tax credit and by extension, the film industry in general. As the owner and president of the largest vendor in this sector in Hawai'i, I can testify without reservation that the measures suggested in this bill will be exceptionally effective in revitalizing the movie production industry in general, and my company specifically. I would expect to be hiring additional workforce shortly after the bill's passage.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Mahalo,

Danny Rosner

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:52:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Simon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2578, creating a Hawaii Film Commission. This will (hopefully!) help Hawaii become a film destination.

We need a more diversified income base in Hawaii (in my opinion) and the film industry is a green industry that brings in a lot of revenue for the state.

In addition to the direct revenue, there's tourist revenue. Tourists see our beautiful state on screen and want to come visit. I have a friend that drives "LOST Tours". He tours people who are fans of the TV show LOST, to film locations. Daily, I see fan posts from various shows that filmed here from people who are posting pics of filming locations.

Mahalo,

Jean Simon

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:03:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Salanoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Committee Members.

My name is John Salanoa, a local film maker and I stand in support of SB2578. I would suggest upon the passing of this bill that legislation come to the Hawaiian film industry experts to help form said commission.

I would also recommend that all union stakeholders have a seat in this commission.

Mahalo for your time in this matter,

John Salanoa

Chair- Hawaii Film Alliance Bills Committee

Actor/ Director/ Producer

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:45:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fabienne lequertier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Fabienne Lequertier, and I am a member of the *Magnum P.I.* fandom.

I respectfully submit comments regarding SB2578. I support the establishment of a Film Commission, provided that it ensures meaningful representation for labor and that its implementation remains efficient and streamlined, so as not to create delays that could adversely affect local employment.

Maintaining strong workforce inclusion alongside administrative efficiency is essential to protecting Hawai'i's workers and preserving the stability and competitiveness of the industry.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Fabienne Lequertier

Fandom of Magnum

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:09:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chauncy Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee. My name is Chauncy Williams, a member of IATSE 665. I've worked in the industry for six years and enjoyed every moment of it.

I stand on my written testimony in support of SB 2578 SD1 HD1. We need bills like this to pass to not only put people to work but to boost our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

-Chauncy Williams

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:10:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamuela Chandler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kamuela Chandler, and I am a filmmaker from Hawai‘i Island in support of SB 2578.

As an independent local creator, I support the creation of a true Hawai‘i Film Commission and dedicated film industry development fund. Hawai‘i has talent, stories, and locations, but too many of us are trying to build careers here without enough structure, access, or long-term support.

This bill would help strengthen the foundation of the film industry in Hawai‘i and create more real opportunity for local filmmakers, crew, and future generations.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:15:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Scalpone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello! I write in support of SB2578 SD1 HD1. We can't let the immensely talented local community of artists lose work again. Efforts to save the film industry benefit the whole island chain's economy. Thank you for your help!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:29:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Reed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

standing in strong support of sb 2578

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:31:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Whitley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I've been working in the TV and Film industry for 25 years here in hawaii. We are a world class destination but we need new leadership in our film office and other state agencies that represent us. For the last 20 years the Film office has not met the moment and the industry has suffered. The people in positions of permitting and attracting productions have never truly worked in the industry, we must create a Film Commission comprised of actual industry leaders. Please pass this bill.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 1:35:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keikilani Grune	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2578.

We need these measures to strengthen Hawai'i's film and television industry. The industry provides critical jobs for local workers and supports many small businesses throughout our communities. To help ensure that Hawai'i remains competitive, we need continued investment and coordination. We need long-term productions. Long-term productions are key for economic stability. When our film/tv industry was strong, I was able to work full time and provide my family with financial stability. When it all came to a screeching halt, it ensued insecurity, uncertainty and fear.

I support SB2578 to strengthen our future.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 2:02:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jonathan johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in full support of bill SB 2578

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 3:07:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lavaun Lei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of SB 2578

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 3:58:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Acain	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm in support for SB 2580, as someone who has been involved in the film industry in Hawaii for over 30 years from in front of the camera, to behind, and as an instructor for the past 25 years training local talent. We need this industry for economical opportunity for the state of Hawaii. This industry is the most logical industry for the islands, as it employs so many positions from talent to set crew, medical, security, food and beverage, carpentry, and technical. Real estate is not cheap here, so it makes sense to keep this industry thriving as an alternative to Tourism, which has proven to be affected by shut downs, such as the Pandemic. But the Film Industry was the only industry keeping the community working.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:05:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Rodbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2578. This will support our state studio facilities which are absolutely key to the film and television industry.

I have had the privilege of being several production company stage manager positions over many years. I worked mainly at the Hawaii Film Studio, (Diamond Head). These are critical facilities that need to be ar the ready to rent to production companies when they choose to film here on the islands. I continue to apply to various production companies to fulfill this important job and be an effective liaison between the film makers and the state facilities and stage operators. Most recently I helped a little with the current renter of the facilities but a full time position was sadly not offered or available. Please pass this bill to support our incredible and amazingly overachieving studio facilities.

Thank you

Peter Rodbell

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:12:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cameron Prestwich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2578.

Hawai‘i’s film industry has grown significantly but lacks a dedicated state commission to coordinate its long-term development. Our film industry generated almost \$170 million in 2023 alone. Supporting this economic engine would lead to even greater growth, and has the potential to create job security in Hawaii’s film industry. Establishing a Film Commission within DBEDT would provide the focused leadership needed to support productions, develop our local workforce, and ensure that Hawai‘i remains a premier filming destination. This is an investment in strategic growth for an industry that already contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to our state economy.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:20:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcus Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill SB2578 SD1 HD1!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:27:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Asaeli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Travis Asaeli, and I am writing in strong support of SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

As someone who cares deeply about the future of Hawai‘i’s film and creative industries, I support this measure because it helps create a stronger long-term foundation for the industry in our state. SB 2578 would establish the Hawai‘i Film Commission within DBEDT and transfer the functions of the Hawai‘i Film Office to that commission, while also creating a Film Industry Development Special Fund and requiring annual reports to the Legislature.

This is an important step for Hawai‘i. A dedicated Film Commission can help improve coordination, workforce development, infrastructure planning, and long-term industry growth. Hawai‘i has the talent, locations, and cultural value to remain competitive, but we need stronger structure and support to keep productions coming here and to create more opportunities for local workers.

A stronger film industry means more than just jobs on set. It supports local families, small businesses, vendors, transportation, hospitality, and many other parts of our economy. It also helps build a future where local people can develop lasting careers in film, television, and digital media here at home.

Please pass SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Travis Asaeli

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 4:38:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anca Silvia Dragalina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Anca Silvia Dragalina, and I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2578.

As a professional actor and model who has worked in the film and television industry for many years, including productions filmed in Hawai‘i, I have personally experienced the positive impact that film and television productions bring to our local economy and community.

The film industry creates valuable opportunities for residents across many sectors. Beyond actors and crew members, productions support local businesses such as hospitality, transportation, catering, construction, and many small service providers. Strengthening this industry means strengthening Hawai‘i’s overall economic ecosystem.

Establishing a Hawaii Film Commission and dedicated development funding would help position Hawai‘i as a more competitive destination for major productions. In an increasingly global market where many regions actively compete for film projects, strong infrastructure, efficient administration, and workforce development are essential.

For local artists, performers, and creative professionals, this legislation represents an opportunity to build sustainable careers here at home rather than needing to relocate elsewhere for work. Supporting the growth of this industry also helps nurture the next generation of filmmakers, storytellers, and creative talent in Hawai‘i.

I am grateful for the work the Legislature is doing to strengthen the creative economy and respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2578.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Anca Dragalina

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

My name is Lisa Coll, and I have worked in the film and television industry for over 20 years, including 15 years as a First Assistant Director and a proud member of the Directors Guild of America.

I am writing in support of SB2578.

As someone who has spent much of my career working both in Hawai'i and across the mainland, I've seen firsthand how important it is for Hawai'i to remain competitive in attracting film and television production. The reality is that productions have many options when deciding where to shoot, and financial incentives and infrastructure support often play a major role in those decisions.

SB2578 represents an important step in strengthening Hawai'i's ability to support this industry. By continuing to invest in and refine the systems that make production possible here, we are not only attracting outside projects—we are also creating long-term opportunities for local crew members, small businesses, and the next generation entering the workforce.

Film and television production brings meaningful economic impact to the state. It supports a wide network of local jobs—from crew members and vendors to hospitality and transportation. Just as importantly, it allows local professionals to build sustainable careers without having to leave Hawai'i.

I've worked with incredibly talented local crews who are more than capable of supporting major productions. With the right support from the state, there is no reason Hawai'i cannot continue to be a thriving production hub.

I respectfully urge you to support SB2578 and help ensure that Hawai'i remains a competitive and viable home for film and television production.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Coll

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 5:35:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Merrill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I've been in film & television for over 30 years now. Entertainment brings so much to the state and to the local businesses it supports. This is a good thing for Hawaii. Please support.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 5:53:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
john cambareri	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB2578. As an Oahu homeowner and performer, I support legislation that bolsters film and tv projects and related spending in Hawaii. With \$5 generated for every \$1 invested into such projects, all of Hawaii benefits, as do the related local workers and businesses.

Mahalo,

John Cambareri

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 5:56:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariann Tesauro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of SB2578.

Mariann Tesauro

Studio Teacher, IATSE 665

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 6:20:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Nitta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is **Kelly Nitta**, and I am an actor and creative professional based in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support of SB 2578**.

Hawai‘i’s film, television, and digital media industries are operating in an increasingly competitive global environment. In order to keep up, **we need systems in place that are efficient**, forward-thinking, and designed to support long-term growth.

Establishing a Hawai‘i Film Commission is a crucial step in that direction. A centralized entity with the authority to oversee film-related activities will improve coordination, streamline processes, and strengthen Hawai‘i’s ability to attract and support productions. This kind of structure already exists in many competing regions, and without it, we risk falling behind. Additionally, many of our current facilities and working environments are not as modern or competitive as those in other major production hubs, which makes it harder to attract large-scale projects.

Creating a dedicated special fund for the film industry ensures that resources are reinvested back into the industry. This supports not only productions, but also infrastructure, workforce development, and future opportunities for local creatives.

As someone working in this industry, I see firsthand how important strong support systems are. A more organized and well-funded film ecosystem means more consistent work, more opportunities for local talent, and a stronger, more sustainable industry overall.

SB 2578 is an important step toward modernizing Hawai‘i’s film infrastructure and setting the industry up for long-term success.

Mahalo for your continued support and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,
Kelly Nitta

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 6:20:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hailey Bowen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support all bills that enrich the film industry in Hawaii. There are so many talented and highly skilled individuals who have lost their careers due to the decline of the film industry in Hawaii in recent years. This is an absolutely gorgeous place that production companies want to utilize if the incentives are available. Every project that chooses to film here stimulates a whole array of local businesses and puts locals in all departments to work with good paying jobs.

Please choose to invest in the people who have dedicated their lives to making ideas come to life. We are very hard working and dedicated people who are being lost to lesser industries while waiting for our industry to come back. Right now we are seeing a surge in production gigs for the first time in years and it is absolutely wonderful. Let's vote to support this bill and see if we can get it back to thriving like we all know it can be!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:08:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
La Fa'amausili-Siliato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is La Fa'amausili-Siliato, and I am a performer and creative professional based in Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of SB 2578 SD1 HD1, relating to the Hawai'i Film Commission.

A strong and well-supported Film Commission is essential to building a thriving film and television industry in our state. As someone who has worked in both live performance and film, I have seen how important it is to have an organized, proactive body that advocates for local talent and helps productions successfully operate in Hawai'i.

The Film Commission plays a vital role in:

- Attracting productions to Hawai'i
- Supporting local workforce development
- Serving as a bridge between production companies and our communities
- Ensuring that projects are executed respectfully and efficiently

When productions come here, they don't just hire actors, they create opportunities for a wide range of local professionals, including technicians, drivers, caterers, designers, and more. Strengthening the Film Commission helps ensure these opportunities are accessible and well-coordinated.

Additionally, having a strong commission helps amplify local voices. It increases the likelihood that our stories are told with authenticity and that local creatives are included in meaningful ways; not just as background, but as collaborators.

Investing in the Hawai'i Film Commission is an investment in our people, our economy, and our cultural storytelling.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, and I respectfully urge you to support SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:25:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Kamoku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your time!

so much talent and love for this industry in the islands! I've said this many times but we live in the most beautiful place on earth. Not only is it an amazing back drop for visual storytelling, but people coming here from all corners of the earth to create is a blessing for them!! This place touches people, and if we bolster this industry, I know it will take care of us too:)

aloha and God bless...

Andy

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:26:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keala Cody Peltier-Nakanelua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2578.

Hawai'i's film industry has grown significantly but lacks a dedicated state commission to coordinate its long-term development. Establishing a Film Commission within DBEDT would provide the focused leadership needed to support productions, develop our local workforce, and ensure that Hawai'i remains a premier filming destination. This is an investment in strategic growth for an industry that already contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to our state economy.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:41:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Hamilton-Lowe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a member of the Directors Guild of America and I am the unit production manager on Protecting Jared, the Netflix film currently shooting on Island.

I write in full support of SB2578.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:43:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
NICOLE ROMBAOA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole Rombaoa, and I am a professional actor and creator who has lived and built my career in Hawai‘i for 37 years. I previously submitted testimony in support of SB 2578 before the Senate Economic Development and Technology Committee, and I am submitting again here because each hearing represents a fresh and independent record — and because I believe the case for this bill is especially compelling before a committee focused on the fiscal health of our state. SB 2578 is not just the right thing to do for Hawai‘i’s creative workforce. It is the right investment for our economy. I urge this committee to pass it forward.

A Funded Commission Is an Investment With a Measurable Return

The question before this committee is not whether to spend money on a Film Commission — it is whether the return justifies the investment. The answer is clearly yes. According to data from the Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, in 2019 alone the film and digital media industry generated an estimated \$707 million in economic impact, \$43.7 million in estimated tax revenues, and supported more than 3,300 jobs statewide. That was before the pandemic and the industry slowdowns that followed. The cost of establishing and operating the Commission under SB 2578 — an executive director, two administrative staff, and the infrastructure of the Commission itself — is modest in comparison to even a fraction of that economic activity. A well-resourced Commission that successfully attracts even one additional major production to Hawai‘i per year would generate returns that dwarf the cost of running it. This is not speculative: states and countries that have invested in robust film agencies have consistently seen their production activity and economic returns grow as a result.

The True Fiscal Risk Is Inaction — and We Have Already Paid Part of That Price

Last year, for the first time in two decades, Hawai‘i began the year without a single active production filming on our islands. That is not a statistic — it is lost wages for actors, lost work for crew members, lost revenue for vendors and small businesses, and lost tax receipts for the state. Every production that chooses Georgia, New Mexico, or another competitor over Hawai‘i because of inadequate institutional support or an uncompetitive incentive structure represents a direct fiscal loss. Union members from IATSE Local 665 have reported being forced to leave the industry or find work outside their field when productions dried up. Rebuilding that workforce takes time and money that the state does not have to waste. The cost of inaction is not zero — it

is the steady erosion of an industry that, at its peak, contributed hundreds of millions of dollars annually to our economy. SB 2578 is part of the answer to stopping that erosion.

The Film Industry Development Special Fund Is Designed to Be Self-Sustaining

One of the most fiscally sound features of SB 2578 is the Film Industry Development Special Fund, which would be funded by revenues, fees, and charges generated through the processing of the Motion Picture, Digital Media, and Film Production Income Tax Credit — including the 0.2% fee already collected from productions claiming the credit. Rather than drawing indefinitely on general fund appropriations, the Commission’s dedicated fund is designed to grow in proportion to the industry it supports: more productions mean more credit activity, which means more revenue flowing into the fund, which enables more investment in attracting and sustaining productions. This is a self-reinforcing fiscal model, not a recurring budget obligation that competes with other priorities. It also creates a firewall between the Commission’s operating capacity and the annual budget cycle, ensuring that the infrastructure does not collapse every time the state faces fiscal pressure. For a Ways and Means committee, that kind of structural sustainability should be exactly what you want to see.

The Current Structure Has Not Been Sufficient — A Commission Changes the Equation

The Hawai‘i Film Office has operated for over four decades within a larger state bureaucracy, without the independent authority, dedicated staffing, or stable funding to aggressively pursue the kind of industry development that our competitors have achieved. That is not a criticism of the dedicated people who work there — it is a structural observation. SB 2578 establishes the Hawai‘i Film Commission with a board that includes representatives from education, the University of Hawai‘i, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the private sector — a cross-institutional team mandated to develop a five-year strategic plan and report annually to the Legislature. That accountability structure, combined with dedicated funding, transforms the Film Office from a reactive administrator into a proactive economic development engine. It is exactly the kind of institutional upgrade that turns a decent incentive program into a world-class one.

Studios Respond to Institutional Seriousness — A Commission Sends That Signal

When major studios and streaming platforms evaluate where to bring a production, they are looking at more than tax credit percentages. They are assessing whether the state has the organizational capacity to be a reliable partner — whether permits will be processed efficiently, whether local crews are trained and available, whether the state’s film agency has enough standing to solve problems when they arise. A formal Film Commission, with an executive director and a mandate from the Legislature, communicates a level of institutional commitment that a Film Office tucked inside a division simply cannot match. Actors like Jason Momoa and Daniel Dae Kim have publicly expressed a desire to bring more productions to Hawai‘i, but have noted that the economics need to work. A Commission that actively markets the state, builds relationships with studios, and develops the workforce they depend on is a key part of making those economics work.

Workforce Development Is Economic Development

SB 2578 requires the Commission to develop and implement a five-year strategic workforce plan and to use the Film Industry Development Special Fund for initiatives that expand the skills and capabilities of Hawai'i's resident workforce in film production, digital media, and related technical fields. This matters enormously for the fiscal case. A well-trained local workforce reduces what productions have to spend flying in mainland talent, makes Hawai'i more attractive as a year-round production destination, and creates the kind of stable career pathways that keep skilled workers in our islands rather than sending them to the mainland. As a working actor, I have seen firsthand what happens when the pipeline dries up and experienced crew members leave the industry or leave the state. Rebuilding that capacity is expensive and slow. The workforce mandate in SB 2578 is an investment in preventing that loss from happening again — and in ensuring that the economic benefits of film production are broadly shared across our community for years to come.

Conclusion

SB 2578 is sound fiscal policy. The Film Industry Development Special Fund is self-sustaining by design. The cost of establishing the Commission is modest relative to the economic activity it is positioned to generate and protect. The cost of continued inaction is measurable and growing. For a committee charged with the fiscal stewardship of this state, the case for SB 2578 is clear: invest in the institutional infrastructure that makes Hawai'i's film industry competitive, and the returns will far exceed the cost. I urge this committee to pass SB 2578. Mahalo nui loa for your time and your service to Hawai'i.

Respectfully,

Nicole Rombaoa

Professional Actor and Creator

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:45:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Fenske	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need it!!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 8:16:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheela Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo nui to our legislators helping to reinvigorate the industry and all the snowballing positive economic and cultural effects of this legislation

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 8:32:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Dombrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Crystal Dombrow, I'm a Hale'iwa resident, a retired theater dancer, and am currently an economics researcher. I strongly encourage the legislature to pass this bill and any others that would support the film industry in Hawai'i.

According to a March 2026 study by The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i, lack of economic opportunity is one of the key factors that makes Hawai'i unaffordable. The TV and film industry brings lucrative employment and supports local businesses throughout the islands. This is one of the few industries that we could keep in Hawai'i that will allow local people to thrive financially, and we are already well-positioned to establish it here with local production companies, local talent, and local experts with deep connections to the international film industry.

Thank you for your time.

Crystal Dombrow

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 8:50:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kulani Watson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2578.

Hawai‘i’s film industry continues to grow and generate significant economic impact, yet it lacks a dedicated body focused on its long-term development. Establishing a Hawai‘i Film Commission within DBEDT would provide the leadership, coordination, and strategic direction needed to support this industry in a meaningful and sustainable way.

A dedicated commission would help streamline communication between productions, government agencies, and local stakeholders while supporting workforce development and infrastructure growth. It also creates space for industry representation, ensuring that the voices of local workers, creatives, and small businesses are part of the conversation as Hawai‘i continues to expand its presence in film and digital media.

From my own perspective as a local writer and creative professional, I see firsthand the potential Hawai‘i has to become a major hub for storytelling and production. There is no shortage of talent here, only a need for stronger systems, clearer pathways, and long-term planning. A Film Commission would help bridge that gap and create more consistent opportunities for local people to build careers in this industry without having to leave home.

SB 2578 is an investment in structure, leadership, and the future of Hawai‘i’s creative economy. With the right coordination and support, this industry can continue to grow in a way that benefits our communities statewide.

I respectfully urge your support for SB 2578.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 9:00:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dezmond Gilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Dezmond Gilla and I have been a working professional in the film industry for over 20 years. Throughout my career I have seen the positive impact productins have had on Hawaii's economy. This industry utilizes many local vendors, buys food from local restaurants, provides jobs, and advertises Hawaii as a tourist destination. Keeping our state competitive for filming only makes good business sense.

Please keep the film industry alive here and provide more jobs for locals to thrive.

Thank you.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 9:12:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randall Yokota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I'm supporting bill SB2578 SD1 HD1. Lets continue to support and keep Hawai'i film industry competitive and keep jobs here on these islands. Let's keep locals working here. Mahalo for your time.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 9:41:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Umipeg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for scheduling these bills and your continued support of Hawai'i's film industry.

I strongly support SB2578 as it will strengthen Hawai'i's film and television industry. The industry provides critical jobs for local workers and supports many small businesses throughout our communities. Continued investment and coordination will help ensure Hawai'i remains competitive and able to sustain long-term production

I believe that strengthening the TV/film industry workforce is crucial to our economy. We need to nurture our local TV/film industry workforce so we can grow in our careers, train incoming crew, and keep our local crew here in Hawai'i.

During the dry spell between mid-2024 and late 2025, we lost some crew members because they couldn't afford to sustain themselves.

Some folks had to find jobs outside of the TV/film industry or relocate to the continent. I had to work in a job that was outside of the TV/film industry after my unemployment benefits were exhausted. I applied to forty-five non-TV/film industry jobs and had eight interviews before I was hired. That's never happened to me before as I'm a hard worker and fast learner with a great personality, but potential employers balked at my resume that has eight years of experience in the TV/film industry. They were reluctant to interview or hire me because they thought I would leave them for a show. The supervisor for non-TV/film industry job that I worked at took a risk and hired me, knowing that I would leave them for a studio TV show or film if the opportunity came up. I'd rather not go through that experience again, and would like to continue to work in the local TV/film industry so I can work towards my goal of being a producer.

I'm currently the producer's assistant for Untamed, the Warner Brothers show distributed by Netflix. I'm fortunate to be part of this production, but this show is shooting only one season in Hawai'i because the premise of the show is that a federal agent investigates murders in a different national parks. It would be great if we could have multiple TV shows here that take place in Hawai'i and can sustain itself for many seasons so we can grow our local workforce.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 9:45:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm I stand in support of this bill

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:29:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
West LeClay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB2578

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

My name is West LeClay, and I am a Hawai‘i-based film and television professional. I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2578.

Hawai‘i has the talent, locations, and cultural richness to be a world-class film hub. However, to truly compete on a global level, we need more than incentives — we need strong infrastructure, leadership, and long-term investment in our industry. SB2578 is a critical step in that direction.

Through my experience working in production both in Hawai‘i and in major markets like Los Angeles and Atlanta, I have seen firsthand what a fully developed film ecosystem looks like. These places have dedicated film commissions, established studio infrastructure, streamlined processes, and clear pathways for workforce development. That level of organization and support is a major reason productions continue to return and grow in those regions.

Hawai‘i has the opportunity to build that same kind of sustainable industry. Establishing a Film Commission and creating a dedicated Film Industry Development Special Fund will help provide the structure and resources needed to support local workforce development, expand production infrastructure, and reinvest in the long-term growth of the industry.

This is not just about attracting productions — it is about building a real industry here at home. A stronger, more organized film sector means more consistent jobs for local residents, more opportunities for the next generation of filmmakers, and greater economic impact across many sectors including small businesses, hospitality, and local vendors.

If we want productions to choose Hawai‘i not just once, but again and again, we need to provide the systems and support that make that possible. SB2578 helps lay that foundation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
West LeClay

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:40:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Uyeda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to HB2578. While I support strengthening Hawai‘i’s film industry, this bill does not achieve meaningful reform. It rebrands an underperforming office, consolidates power, and creates new financial mechanisms with insufficient transparency.

My opposition is based on the following critical concerns:

1. This is a Rebrand, Not a Reform

Section 9 of this bill transfers every officer, employee, contract, and file from the existing Hawai‘i Film Office directly to the new commission. There is no provision for performance review, leadership change, or accountability for past failures. This does not create a new, modern institution; it simply creates a new legal container for the status quo and grants that same apparatus increased authority.

2. The Special Fund Lacks Basic Safeguards

The proposed Film Industry Development Special Fund suffers from a total lack of oversight. It contains no spending caps by category, no mandate for an independent auditor, no requirement for the public disclosure of grants before disbursement, and, notably, no clawback provisions to protect taxpayer dollars. The only accountability mechanism is a self-reported annual report written by the very commission spending the funds. Before this Legislature creates a larger fund under this structure, it should demand a full, transparent accounting of the 2021 local filmmaker fund—specifically where that money went and what measurable outcomes it produced.

3. The Tax Credit Waiver Is an Unchecked Power Grab

The amendment to §235-17(1) grants the commission the power to waive the \$17 million per-production tax credit cap based on criteria it writes itself. This bypasses legislative approval and lacks any requirement for advance public notice. This represents a dangerous transfer of significant fiscal authority away from the Legislature and into the hands of an appointed body with no built-in safeguards against potential abuse.

Requested Amendments/Next Steps

I urge this committee to reject HB2578 in its current form. If the committee intends to proceed with a restructuring, I strongly recommend that you:

- Require a public, independent accounting of all existing fund expenditures.
- Mandate independent, third-party oversight of the new Special Fund.
- Establish a transparent, competitive grant process with publicly vetted criteria.
- Ensure that executive leadership is appointed through an open, merit-based process rather than transferring existing staff wholesale.

Hawai'i's filmmakers and taxpayers deserve a commission built for transparency and accountability from the ground up. HB2578, as currently drafted, does not deliver that.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2578
KIMEE BALMILERO

April 1st, 2026

Aloha,

My name is Kimee Balmilero. I was born and raised in Hawai'i and have been a professional actor for almost 30 years. Like many of us in this industry, I had to leave home to continue my career. Being able to come back and work here has meant everything. It allows me to stay close to my family and be present as my parents get older, while also building a life here as a taxpaying homeowner and small business owner.

I support SB 2578 because it feels like a step toward taking this industry seriously in a long-term, sustainable way.

Right now, film and television in Hawai'i can feel a little unpredictable. There's talent here, there's interest here, but we don't always have the structure in place to support consistent growth. Creating a dedicated Film Commission sends a clear message that this industry matters and that Hawai'i is ready to support it in a more focused and organized way.

This bill is not just about today's productions. It's about building something that lasts. Investing in infrastructure, workforce development, and resources gives local people a real chance to grow careers here instead of having to leave. It also helps Hawai'i compete with places that already have strong systems in place to attract and keep productions.

When we invest in this industry with intention, the benefits reach far beyond just film sets. It supports local workers, strengthens small businesses, and creates opportunities for the next generation of creatives coming up right here in Hawai'i.

For me, this is about being able to continue doing the work I love in the place I love, and making sure others have that same opportunity.

I strongly urge your support of SB 2578.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimee J. Balmilero". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" at the end of the name.

Kimee J. Balmilero
Actor & Kaneohe Kid

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 6:15:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Logan Laveti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

Creating a dedicated Hawai'i Film Commission is a meaningful step toward building a more sustainable and organized industry here. There is strong opportunity, but also a clear need for better structure and long-term planning. A commission with its own funding and focus can help coordinate workforce development, support local talent, and ensure that Hawai'i continues to grow as a serious production hub.

When productions are well supported, the benefits extend across jobs, businesses, and global visibility for Hawai'i's culture and people.

I strongly support this bill.

Thank you for your time,
Logan Laveti

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 6:46:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Hathaway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Comment in Support of SB 2578 – Hawai‘i Film Commission

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2578.

Establishing an independent Hawai‘i Film Commission is a critical step toward modernizing and strengthening our state’s film and television industry. While incentives attract productions, long-term success depends on having a streamlined, industry-focused governance structure that can respond efficiently to the needs of productions and local stakeholders.

A dedicated commission will improve coordination, reduce administrative complexity, and enhance Hawai‘i’s competitiveness in a global market where ease of doing business is essential.

The inclusion of a development fund is equally important, ensuring that we are not only attracting outside productions but also investing in our local workforce, infrastructure, and creative community.

SB 2578 supports a more sustainable, well-managed, and forward-looking industry that creates stable, middle-class jobs for Hawai‘i residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marie Hathaway
Mililani, Hawai‘i

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 7:28:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Reedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha counsel,

Thank you for your time and efforts to listen to the people of the islands, both whom agree and disagree with this ballot. I am someone who has seen firsthand what the film industry can do for the economy and the community of Hawaii. We all know that the tourism industry is a driving force of the economy, and the film industry helps cater to that as well. We also know that the over reliance of the tourism industry, and not giving proper avenues to the people on the islands has created a brutal class disparity and limited options for growth.

An industry that can give opportunities, launch Hawaiian talent worldwide, and tell the true story of Hawaii is the film industry. The successes and millions that have come from Lilo and Stitch have helped the economy while also launching homegrown Hawaiian talent to a worldwide audience. The competitive tax incentives and this measure being passed will create jobs, tourism, and economic benefits for the island in my opinion, and because of that I support measuring this ballot.

Mahalo,

Erik Reedy

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 7:29:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
claudia kühn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nach Hawaii,ich möchte die Fimindustrie auf Hawaii unterstützen, es hängen für viele Menschen Arbeitsplätze dran,Geschäfte, Hotels etc. profitieren, daher möchte ich mein Zeugnis abgeben,ich liebe die Serien und Filme die auf Ihren schönen Inseln gedreht wurden,und die hoffentlich noch gedreht werden, da ich ein großer Fan der Serie Magnum pi ist es für mich speziell Oahu, Ich wünsche Ihnen alles erdenklich Gute da Sie ja gerade erst von den Unwettern und Fluten getroffen wurden,ich sende Ihnen meine Grüße aus Deutschland, Mahalo

mf g

claudia kühn

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 7:59:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Y. Russell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2578,

This would efficiently streamline and modernize the way our State film offices (along with our neighboring film commissioners) handle the potential larger and excited influx of big studio films and television programs to film here. Also this would importantly open up opportunities for local home-grown storytellers and filmmakers to incentivise our talent to remain in our aina.

Mahalo,

George Russell

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:08:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Juett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 2578.

It is essential to update the Hawai'i Film Commission and empower it with advocates who specialize in attracting productions and managing tax incentives. Our economy, small businesses, and large film community have suffered over the last couple of years due to a loss of production and a decline in national and international competitiveness.

This legislation is vital for maintaining local jobs, ensuring workforce stability, and supporting small businesses throughout the islands. Furthermore, it fosters long-term industry growth and enhances Hawai'i's ability to remain competitive for global productions.

As a local actor and an active member of the Hawai'i creative community, I have personally witnessed the vitality of our filmmaking industry. However, I have also seen the significant challenges our community currently faces, with many local professionals experiencing hardship due to a substantial loss of work.

I would like to thank the committee for scheduling these bills and for your continued support of Hawai'i's film industry. I urge you to pass these measures to help revitalize this essential sector of our economy.

Best regards,

Jeff Juett

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:09:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wainani Tomich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Wainani Young Tomich, and I am a Hawai'i-based Assistant Director with decades of experience working in film and television production across the islands, the continent and internationally. I am writing in **support of SB2578 SD1**. I commend the Legislature for recognizing the need to strengthen and formalize the State's approach to film industry development.

Film and television production brings substantial private investment into Hawai'i—supporting local jobs, small businesses, and entire communities. A dedicated Film Commission is a meaningful step toward maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly aggressive global production landscape.

However, I respectfully offer the following concerns and recommendations to ensure the Commission is as effective and representative as intended:

1. Workforce Representation Must Include All Key Guilds^[SEP] While the bill proposes labor representation, it does not clearly ensure inclusion of all major guilds—specifically the Directors Guild of America (DGA) and Writers Guild of America (WGA).^[SEP] Directors, Unit Production Managers and Assistant Directors are uniquely responsible for translating creative vision into executable plans—developing budgets, schedules, and on-the-ground logistics that determine whether a project succeeds in Hawai'i. Excluding this perspective risks overlooking the very individuals who operationalize production.

Recommendation: Ensure explicit inclusion of DGA (and WGA) representation within the labor seats to reflect the full scope of industry expertise.

2. Balanced Representation Between State and Industry^[SEP] For this Commission to function effectively, it must reflect a true partnership between government and the industry it serves. An imbalance—particularly one weighted toward state agency representation—risks slowing decision-making and disconnecting policy from on-the-ground realities.

Recommendation: Ensure a thoughtful balance between state agency members and active industry professionals, so that policy decisions are both administratively sound and practically informed by real production experience.

3. On-the-Ground Production Experience is Critical^[SEP]For the Commission to be effective, it must include individuals with current, hands-on production experience in Hawai‘i. Those actively working in the field understand the real-time challenges productions face—from permitting and location logistics to workforce capacity and infrastructure limitations.

Recommendation: Prioritize appointments of members with recent, in-state production experience across multiple budget levels.

4. Clear Mandate for Competitiveness^[SEP]Other jurisdictions are rapidly expanding their incentives and streamlining their processes. Hawai‘i must not only participate—but compete.

Recommendation: Include a clear directive for the Commission to regularly evaluate Hawai‘i’s incentive structure, permitting efficiency, and overall competitiveness relative to other markets.

5. Transparency and Industry Engagement^[SEP]The success of this Commission will depend on trust and communication with the local industry.

Recommendation: Require regular public reporting and structured engagement with local industry stakeholders, including workforce organizations and community groups.

In closing, I strongly support the creation of a Hawai‘i Film Commission. With thoughtful adjustments, this body can become a powerful engine for economic growth, workforce development, and authentic storytelling rooted in our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued support of Hawai‘i’s film and television industry.

Respectfully,

Wainani Young Tomich

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:11:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyla Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill!!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:24:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hitomi Imai Rosner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chris Todd, and Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi

My name is Hitomi Rosner.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2578 relating to the film industry income tax credit.

I want to thank the entire legislature for their efforts during this session to enhance the production income tax credit.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Mahalo,
Hitomi I Rosner

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:39:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shereen Balles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Kākou,

My name is Shereen Balles.

I support this bill. Thank you for hearing this bill. As a film industry professional, my hope is that the commission of peers will be sure to create gainfully working opportunities for the entire film industry.

Mahalo nūnui,

Shereen Balles

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:44:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vincent Laurent Loïc LEQUERTIER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Vincent Lequertier, and I am a member of the Magnum P.I. fandom.

I respectfully submit comments regarding SB2578. I support the establishment of a Film Commission, provided that it ensures meaningful and effective representation for labor and that its implementation remains efficient and well-coordinated, so as not to create delays that could adversely affect local employment and ongoing projects.

Maintaining strong workforce inclusion alongside administrative efficiency is essential to protecting Hawai'i's workers, supporting local talent, and preserving the long-term stability and competitiveness of the industry.

Mahalo for your time, attention, and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Vincent Lequertier

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 8:59:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barrie Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Establishing this department is crucial to the continued success and growth of the Hawaii film industry.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:01:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Serena Flores, and I am a film industry professional based in Hawai‘i with over 20 years of experience in television and film production.

I strongly support SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

This bill is important because it establishes an independent Hawai‘i Film Commission to streamline film tax credits and provide focused, industry-specific governance. A dedicated commission and development fund will help strengthen our industry, support local jobs, and keep Hawai‘i competitive in attracting productions.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Serena Flores

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:06:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Lee Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the committee,

My name is Lisa Lee Mitchell. I am a member of both IATSE Local 665 and the Hawai'i Film Alliance. I am also a constituent in Vice Chair Takenouchi's District. I strongly support SF2578 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lee Mitchell

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:08:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Luong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting SB2578 SD1 HD1 means supporting Hawaii's economy, growth, future, infrastructure, and flourishing. Thank you for your consideration.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:09:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the committee,

My name is Frank Mitchell. I am a member of IATSE Local 665. I am also a constituent in Vice Chair Takenouchi's District. I strongly support SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frank Mitchell

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:12:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Rosner	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

SB2578 and SB2580 I emphatically support. they help build a great film and tv industry here with great paying jobs. But more importantly the more filmed in Hawaii the more it promotes tourism the life blood of Hwaih. the more film and tv the more tourism the more for everyone on Hawaii. these are a win win bills. thanks very very much Mark Rosner

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:14:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Cruickshank	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

Thank you for bringing this bill to the table and for hearing testimony from we the people who are impacted by this bill. It seems like the strengthening of a Film Commission can play a big part, along with tax incentives, in helping to encourage the film and TV industry to come back to Hawaii. A strong Film Commission plays a huge part in acting as liaisons and stewards of our home by working directly with producers to help meet their needs while connecting them to the many talented and experienced local professionals who have made a career out of working in the business. A strong film commission plays an important role in marketing, and introducing what is available here to potentially hesitant producers. at the same time the commission can help relay to incoming productions the special practices we all believe in regarding respect for culture, land and the sea. A strong film commission is a vital building block in bringing work in this sector back to Hawaii. This work uplifts families who rely on the industry, businesses, restaurants, and many other sectors wh benefit from the financial influx brought here by fim production.

Thank you again for bring thi bill to the table and for hearing and reading testimony.

Aloha,

Michael Cruickshank

(cameraman)

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:16:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jacob White, and I am writing in strong support of SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

The Hawai'i Film Commission plays a vital role in bringing productions to our islands and ensuring they run smoothly. Their work directly impacts the number of jobs available to local crew and the overall health of our industry.

From my experience, having a strong, well-supported Film Commission makes a real difference. It helps streamline communication, supports incoming productions, and ensures that local workers and businesses are prioritized and included.

This bill represents an investment in the infrastructure that keeps our industry functioning. Without that support, it becomes much harder for Hawai'i to attract and sustain productions in an increasingly competitive global market.

For many of us, this isn't just an industry—it's how we support our families and stay rooted in Hawai'i. Strengthening the Film Commission helps protect those livelihoods and keeps opportunities here at home.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for scheduling this measure and for your continued commitment to supporting Hawai'i's film industry.

Sincerely,

Jacob White

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:33:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sky Pierce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:43:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for bringing this bill to the floor. Please do all in your power to support the film industry. When the film industry thrives, the islands thrive. Not only does the film industry provide livable wages for filmmakers industry workers, all of the support industries also thrive (hardware, food, housing, etc)

having a committee dedicated to uplifting the film community at large and keeping out facilities and connections on par and up to date is helpful and supportive. Please vote yes.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:06:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grace Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Grace Hall, and I am writing in strong support of SB2578.

I have worked in Hawai‘i’s film industry for over five years, and I’ve seen firsthand both the incredible potential of this industry—and the gaps that hold it back. We have the talent, the locations, and the workforce, but we lack the centralized support and long-term coordination needed to truly grow and sustain this industry.

SB2578 is a crucial step in changing that.

Establishing a dedicated Hawai‘i Film Commission and a Film Industry Development Special Fund would provide the structure and focus our industry has been missing. Right now, opportunities can feel inconsistent, and many of us are left navigating our careers without clear pathways for growth. A commission would help create stability, strengthen our workforce, and ensure that local talent is not only hired—but developed and retained.

This bill is not just about attracting productions—it’s about investing in the people who live here and want to build lasting careers here. People like me, who have committed years to this industry and want to continue contributing to Hawai‘i’s economy without being forced to leave for more stable opportunities elsewhere.

I love this work, and I love this state. SB2578 represents a future where we don’t have to choose between the two.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Grace Hall

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:31:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zenues-Jay Vaimanino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you to our legislators for scheduling these bills and supporting our industry. The realization that we must make our voices heard to make a difference is the reason I am writing in support of this bill. The ever growing Film industry right here in Hawai'i has built a momentum that was short lived and is actively picking up steam in an upwards trajectory.

We humbly ask for your consideration to pass these bills so the dreams of young Kanaka, Pasifika children, & Hawai'i residents have the opportunity to follow their dreams of being in the film industry without leaving the comfort of their home. When you say there's something in the air, I believe that saying is proven true right here on the shores of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

a Pasifika child who grew up and never let go of their dream.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:48:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
david presley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need this. Please

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:50:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christina presley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Counting on you getting this done.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:59:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Laulu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs & Members,

My name is Tara F.Laulu & I belong to Fandoms of MagnumPI & huge supporter for HAWAII Film Industry & for Entire Crews of HAWAII Nei.

I respectfully support this bill. I support the concept of Film Commission provided that Labor has meaningful representation and the Implementation is Streamlined to avoid delays affecting Local jobs. Ensuring workforce inclusion and Administrative Efficiency will protect HAWAII Workers & Film Industry Stability.

Mahalo Nui Loa Chairs & Members for your Kokua.

Tara F. Laulu

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 10:59:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ute K Finch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a viable industry. It's been proven in the past. Mahalo for supporting it!

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:03:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Archuleta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HD1. As a professional in the creative sector, I believe that establishing a dedicated Hawai‘i Film Commission is a critical step in professionalizing and protecting an industry that is vital to our economic future.

The Importance of a Dedicated Commission

- **Creating a Path for the Next Generation:** Our creative youth shouldn't have to choose between their home and their career. By creating a formalized Film Commission and the **Film Industry Development Special Fund**, we are building a permanent infrastructure that generates long-term, high-paying jobs. This is how we ensure our future generations can stay here and build successful lives.
- **Modernizing Our Approach:** Elevating the Film Office to a Commission gives our industry a stronger seat at the table. It provides the focus and specialized staff needed to navigate the fast-moving global media landscape and keep our islands competitive.
- **Fueling Creative Growth:** By refining the "Creative Industries" fund and allowing it to support **facilities and infrastructure**, this bill addresses a major bottleneck. We need local soundstages and production hubs to keep work consistent year-round, rather than relying solely on seasonal projects.
- **Accountability to the People:** The requirement for annual reports ensures that these investments are directly benefiting our local workforce and small businesses.

Conclusion

Investing in a dedicated Film Commission is an investment in our local talent and our community’s resilience. We have the beauty and the skill; now we need the structural support to ensure our creative industry flourishes for decades to come.

I respectfully urge the committee to PASS this measure.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:24:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kainoa Kaeha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you for continuing to schedule these bills and your support for the Hawaii film industry.

I am testifying in support of bill HB2580. I am an aspiring young filmmaker, about to graduate from UH Manoa's film program with Honors. I am fortunate enough to have made connections with folks working within the industry that I am about to join. My one worry about breaking into the industry is that there aren't enough productions, so of course I am in support of these bills that would bring more work to Hawaii. This would be supporting my future career and those of my classmates who have been alongside me also pushing hard to get out there into the film world.

Thank you,

-Kainoa

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:31:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Alexis Flores, and I work in Hawai‘i’s film industry.

I strongly support SB 2578 SD1 HD1.

This bill is important because it will strengthen our local industry, create more opportunities for people like me starting our careers, and help keep productions and jobs in Hawai‘i.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:41:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Spicer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Bill SB 2578

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Bryan Spicer, and I have had the privilege of serving as the Executive Producer and Director on series such as Hawaii Five-0 and Magnum P.I. Over the past decade, I have witnessed firsthand the growth of the film industry in this beautiful state.

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill SB 2578, which seeks to establish a film commission. Although this bill needs work with the details, this initiative is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Support for Industry Growth-** A dedicated film commission will provide the necessary resources and guidance for filmmakers, ensuring that our industry continues to thrive and attract diverse projects.
2. **Long-Term Planning:** Establishing a film commission will enable strategic planning for the future of our industry, fostering an environment where both new and established local filmmakers can succeed.
3. **Strengthening Workforce and Infrastructure:** A film commission will not only enhance our workforce development through training and educational programs but also prioritize infrastructure improvements essential for supporting film production.
4. **Workforce representation must include all the key guilds and unions.** While the Bill proposes labor representation, it does not clearly ensure inclusion of all major guilds specifically the Directors guild of America and the Writers guild of America. Writer and Directors are equally responsible for bringing work and developing projects on the island.
5. **Balanced representation between state and film industry.** There must be a true partnership between government and industry to help the quick decisions that need to be made for film industry needs.
6. **A strong percentage of this commission should be film veterans.** We feel this is crucial for the success of a film commission in Hawaii.

The establishment of a film commission will be a significant step forward in solidifying Hawaii's position as a premier filming destination. I urge you to support Bill SB 2578 for the benefit of our local economy, workforce, and the creative arts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Spicer

Director - DGA

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:42:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fairai Richmond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and I'm so grateful for our State Film commission and legislation

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:45:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in support of SB2578.

I agree with the findings of the previous committee in that instead of having an office that interacts with film projects, Hawai'i needs a commission to be building the film industry in Hawai'i, focusing on workforce development, infrastructure development, and industry development. We need to be building the industry so that we are telling our stories, not just other people's stories being told in Hawai'i.

The film industry is another economic driver that can help us move away from tourism, and we need to support that. It can build our own people up to have sustainable and meaningful employment, if we support it the right way, and I believe a commission will be able to do that.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Keoni Shizuma

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:48:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaliko Fase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been in the film industry for almost 10 years and I support this bill. It'll help out tremendously. Mahalo

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:52:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnathon Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 12:10:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luis Linares	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou, as you might have discovered by now with all the efforts that you have been helping get through to revibe our Hawai'i Film Industry stronger, bigger, and better than ever before. It is an industry that is very complex and expands over a variety of fields all in what seems to be a controlled chaos at times with an umbrella that affects a tremendous amount of different aspects of the community and echnomy with a very specific purpose. Therefore it is paramount that there is a dedicated commission with extencive knowledge of the inns and outs of the processes, requirements, challenges, and opportunity that film productions encounter in order to maximize efficiency and prosperity in all aspects of the Film Making process. To the benefit of the state, the community and the productions themselves. Mahalo for your support. Aloha

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 12:49:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
O. Carr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2578 SD1 HD1 relating to the film industry.

This measure strengthens Hawai'i's film sector by establishing a dedicated Film Commission, improving coordination, and creating a clear structure for long-term growth. It also supports broader creative industries through targeted funding and strategic investment.

By enhancing accountability and ensuring consistent reporting, this bill promotes transparency while positioning Hawai'i to better attract major productions and develop local talent.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB2578 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 12:54:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Depicolzuane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm in support of SB 2578 relating to DBEDT and a Hawai'i Film Commission, and Film Production Income Tax Credit, and a Hawai'i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund.

The Hawai'i Film Office has long been a problem in its management, efficiency and more. A newer Hawai'i Film Commission under DBEDT will require greater oversight, audits, accountability, and effectiveness for our community. However, I believe it's a step in a positive direction. It must also include restaffing, especially of the upper management.

I'm in favor of the Film Production Income Tax Credit. This needs to apply equally to independent filmmakers, as well as larger productions.

I also support the Hawai'i Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund with the retitle and oversight.

Thank you so much for your consideration and all that you are trying to do for Hawai'i and our creative industry.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 12:57:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Maloney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and I thank legislators for considering this and the other bills enhancing Hawaii's film industry.

And even as a member of a Los Angeles local who works here on and off, I support any legislation that supports my local Hawaiian colleagues first. The Hawaii movie and television workforce is highly professional and on par with anywhere else. They deserve the support of these bills to keep Hawaii's entertainment technicians working, and keep companies filming here!

Kevin Maloney

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 1:17:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Phyllis Bruce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the members of the state's legislature! I am a member of The Fandom of Magnum PI, and am in support of this bill. I enjoyed seeing the scenes of your beautiful island in watching this incredible show which honored our veterans and your beautiful Hawaiian culture. Having a film commission would ensure great shows like this continue to honor your state, while supporting your people and the businesses of your community. I would encourage you to pass this bill.

Thank you,

Phyllis Bruce

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 1:38:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Aiwohi-Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2578.

This bill can provide a dedicated state commission to support our local industry by coordinating development in the long-term, and in addition it would help to centralize the leadership and organized commission to support the industry workforce and the productions. This leads to decisions to be more streamlined and better representations amongs the different groups/organizations and unions.

Again, I strongly urge your support for SB 2578.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 1:44:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taj Nakoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2580.

I was born and raised in Hawai‘i and am pursuing a career as an actor. Opportunities in film and television production are important to me because I want to build that future here at home rather than having to leave the state.

Hawai‘i’s film industry already provides meaningful economic impact, generating local jobs, supporting hundreds of businesses, and bringing millions of dollars into the state. Strengthening and modernizing the tax credit will help Hawai‘i stay competitive and continue attracting productions that create real opportunities for local workers and emerging talent.

I respectfully urge your support for SB 2580.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 1:57:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lachlan Ta'imua Hannemann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this !

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 1:59:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaun Skinner Wolfe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider passing this bill. Our livelihood and ability to continue living at home in Hawai'i as film industry workers depends on it.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 2:12:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betty Bolton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2578. This bill and related bills are needed to establish a strong and long term film industry in our State. Hawaii can be a strong player in this industry but not without setting up the tools and systems to get it going. The benefits for our people and small business operators is huge. I myself am a small player but I have seen first hand others making a living supporting the film business here. Good jobs which support families and keep are friends and family in the state and not lost to the mainland! Hawaii should be in the entertainment arena. It also has a built in advertising element. Please make this bill part of your Kuliana and get the film industry going in our state.

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 3:04:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Puakahiki Kaina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee

Re: Testimony in Support with Considerations

Relating to the Establishment of the Hawai'i Film Commission

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kau'i Kaina. I am a Native Hawaiian educator, cultural practitioner, and filmmaker, and I am writing in support of this measure with thoughtful considerations for its long-term implementation.

I would like to first acknowledge the continued efforts of Hawai'i's film community and industry advocates who have worked to grow and sustain this sector. This bill represents an important step forward in modernizing Hawai'i's approach to film, television, and digital media by establishing a formal Hawai'i Film Commission and strengthening the State's ability to compete in a rapidly evolving global production landscape.

I support the intent of this bill to:

- Establish a centralized Hawai'i Film Commission with clear authority and direction**
- Strengthen coordination across counties and agencies**
- Invest in infrastructure, workforce development, and emerging technologies**
- Position Hawai'i to remain competitive with other regions investing heavily in film and media**

As the bill notes, the industry is rapidly evolving through advances in artificial intelligence, virtual production, and digital workflows, and Hawai'i must be prepared to grow alongside these changes.

At the same time, as we move toward a more structured and centralized model, I believe it is important that we remain intentional about how this system is built and who it ultimately serves.

Hawai‘i is not only a production destination—it is a place with deep cultural, historical, and environmental significance.

The long-term success of a Hawai‘i Film Commission will depend on:

- **Maintaining strong relationships with local communities**
- **Ensuring that cultural knowledge is approached with care and respect**
- **Creating space for Hawai‘i-based voices to meaningfully participate in shaping the industry**

I appreciate that this bill includes a seat for expertise in indigenous and cultural storytelling on the commission.

That inclusion is important and can serve as a strong foundation moving forward.

One of the most promising aspects of this bill is its focus on:

- **Workforce development**
- **K–12 and postsecondary pathways**
- **Support for emerging and independent creators**

These efforts are essential.

As someone working in education and film, I see tremendous potential in building a stronger pipeline for local talent—particularly for our youth—to not only participate in the industry, but to grow within it over time.

Looking ahead, continued investment in local capacity will help ensure that Hawai‘i is not only hosting productions, but also developing its own creative leadership.

I also appreciate the bill’s emphasis on:

- **Transparency through annual reporting**
- **Accountability in the administration of incentives and programs**
- **Strategic reinvestment through the Film Industry Development Special Fund**

These elements will be important in maintaining public trust and ensuring that the benefits of this industry are clearly understood and broadly shared.

I support this measure and the establishment of a Hawai‘i Film Commission as an important step in strengthening and modernizing the State’s film and digital media industry.

I also encourage continued collaboration between industry, community, and cultural voices to ensure that this growth remains sustainable, inclusive, and reflective of Hawai‘i’s unique identity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**Respectfully,
Puakahiki Kau'i Kaina**

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 9:22:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tristy	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

I strongly support SB 2578, which establishes a Hawai'i Film Commission and a Film Industry Development Special Fund to strengthen the long-term growth and sustainability of Hawai'i's film and media industry.

This legislation impacts thousands of local residents, including many friends, colleagues, neighbors, and family members working in the industry. Film and television production supports a wide network of jobs and small businesses across hospitality, transportation, construction, equipment rentals, and more. I have personally seen crew members struggle or turn to other work during slow periods when productions are not here.

As someone working in the industry as talent and an emerging producer, I have had to expand into other markets to maintain consistent opportunities while striving to bring that work back home. I have also had to personally invest in my own training, classes, and resources, and having stronger infrastructure to support these efforts would be greatly beneficial for many in our local workforce.

Hawai'i has the talent, infrastructure, and potential to sustain far more opportunities locally, retain our workforce, and further diversify and stimulate our economy beyond tourism.

Those of us in the industry also serve as ambassadors for Hawai'i by helping connect projects, producers, and creative talent to the islands. Establishing a dedicated Film Commission and development fund will help ensure our local cast and crews are prepared for future productions while building a lasting industry that benefits both current and future generations.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Tristy Chun

Honolulu, Hawai'i

SB-2578-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 9:36:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Parker Ellenburg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I'm writing to ask you to support SB2578.

This legislation helps local jobs and small businesses in Hawaii by helping productions come to our islands. Without your support it will be increasingly difficult for Hawaii to compete with other locations, and locals and their businesses will suffer as a result.

Please help bring Productions to Hawaii and help our island economy and its people thrive.

All the best,
Parker Ellenburg