

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
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CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
8:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3085, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FILM STUDIO

Senate Bill 3085, Senate Draft 2 proposes to provide an exemption to dispositions of lands set aside for film studio and film studio operation from prior approval of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) pursuant to section 171-11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, thus streamlining the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's (DBEDT) use of the Hawaii Film Studio for filming activity and other film-related business in order to more efficiently develop Hawai'i's film, media, and creative industries. The studio falls under DBEDT through its Hawaii Film Office (HFO). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the measure and offers the following comments.**

Senate Bill 3085, Senate Draft 2 proposes to eliminate the need for HFO to get approval of new tenants from the BLNR. The Department has no objections to this as historically, once every few years, HFO would enter into a revocable permit agreement with a production company, the most recent production being "NCIS Hawai'i" until it was recently replaced by "Untamed". The proposed change would reduce workload for the BLNR and the Department, while streamlining HFO's use of the film studio.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
SB 3085, SD2
RELATING TO THE HAWAII' I FILM STUDIO

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) **strongly supports** SB 3085, SD2 relating to the Hawai'i Film Studio, to amend section 171-11, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to streamline the ability to meet production timelines by providing the Director of DBEDT the ability to authorize and approve production tenancy at the site through an amendment to this section. It also repeals the Act on June 30, 2030, if the Hawaii Film Studio is still at the Diamond Head location as of that date.

Productions frequently need to confirm stage tenancy on short notice as financing, shipping, and episodic schedules change. When studio tenancy approvals must wait for an external meeting cycle, the result can be avoidable production delays or a reduction in the number of shoot days completed in Hawai'i. In today's competitive environment, productions can and do relocate portions of work elsewhere when timelines cannot be met.

Hawai'i's film and television activity represents substantial in-state spending and local hiring. DBEDT's cost-benefit reporting shows qualified expenditures in recent years ranging from approximately \$169 million to over \$333 million statewide, supporting thousands of hires and significant payments to Hawai'i-based businesses. Ensuring Hawai'i can execute quickly on facility access is a practical competitiveness issue.

DBEDT Testimony
SB 3085, SD2
March 18, 2026
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This measure is intended to remove scheduling friction, not to reduce accountability. DBEDT will continue to require appropriate insurance, enforce facility terms and conditions, and maintain written policies and documentation for tenancy approvals.

This administrative bill optimizes the process for this purpose-built facility which the state has invested more than \$25 million in capital improvements over the time the department has held the executive order for oversight. Through this administration proposed amendment, DBEDT is able to ensure productions an efficient and effective process which aligns with the specific needs of the industry, particularly series productions who are core to the growth of our production workforce.

We appreciate this opportunity to testify.



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

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Statement of
GEORJA SKINNER
Administrator, Creative Industries Division
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
8:30AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
SB3085 SD2
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FILM STUDIO

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the sections of **SB3085 SD2**, relating to amending section 171-11, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to streamline the process of production rentals of the Hawai'i film studio to meet production timelines by designating the Director of DBEDT to authorize and approve production tenancy and inclusion of a new Section 4 in SD2 which reinforces the need for a long term strategic plan for studio infrastructure.

This administrative bill optimizes the process for the state's purpose-built facility, which has invested more than \$25 million in capital improvements. Through providing a more streamlined approval process, it also creates business certainty for studios and productions. This will establish a more efficient and effective process which aligns with the specific needs of the industry, particularly series productions who are core to the growth of our production workforce.

With the current production industry in a major inflection point, and large and mid-size studio complexes vacancy rates at an all-time high, removing the certainty of HFS may impact film and television production attraction due to uncertainty of its future. Short- and long-term strategic plans for not only infrastructure but growing the film, media and creative industries in an integrated ecosystem of incentives, workforce training, facilities and content development for export is a focus of the division and department.

We note that a strategic plan for our state film industry was finalized and released in 2016, the result of which is the current UH and private sector plan for a multi-stage complex in West Oahu. Today, in order to be a global powerhouse for film, media and creative content, Hawai'i needs an updated, integrated strategic and holistic vision to meet the industry as it evolves.

CID will work to achieve these mutual goals which the Administration, Industry and the Legislature to streamline our rental process for HFS as noted in SB3085 SD2.

We appreciate this opportunity to testify.

SB-3085-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:21:01 PM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Wiecking	IATSE Local 665	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Christopher Wiecking and I represent IATSE Local 665 Hawaii.

I am submitting my testimony in SUPPORT of SB3085 SD2.

Thank you for your time and support.

Mahalo

SB-3085-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:13:02 PM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Meredith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Joshua J. Meredith. I'm a Maui resident and member of IATSE Local 665, the union representing technicians and artisans in the entertainment industry in Hawai'i. I strongly support SB 3085.

March 18, 2026

House Committee on Economic Development and Technology
Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Husseyi, Vice Chair



Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room #423and via video conference

RE: SB 3085 SD2 – Relating to the Hawaii Film Studio

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Nānakūli, Wai'anae, and Mākaha. We work on behalf of our members and the broader business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and to help West O'ahu businesses thrive.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce **supports SB 3085 SD2** , which **streamlines** the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's use of the Hawai'i Film Studio by exempting film studio and film studio operations from prior approval by the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

A **strong and competitive film industry** is an important component of **Hawai'i's diversified economy**. Film and television productions **generate direct spending, support local small businesses, and create high-quality jobs** across a wide range of sectors including construction, transportation, catering, hospitality, equipment rental, and professional services.

Productions often must secure studio space on short notice due to financing, shipping, and episodic scheduling requirements. **Delays in facility approvals** can result in **lost production days** or the relocation of work to other states or countries. **SB 3085 improves efficiency and predictability** in the use of an existing state asset while maintaining its public purpose.

From a **West O'ahu perspective**, a **stable and growing film industry** supports **local employment opportunities** and strengthens the **broader small business ecosystem**. West O'ahu is experiencing **significant population growth and ongoing economic development**, and the creative industries including film, media, and digital production represent an important pathway for **workforce development and career opportunities for local residents**.

Importantly, **SB 3085 is an administrative, streamlining measure** that improves **operational efficiency** without expanding the footprint of public lands or altering the underlying public purpose of the Hawai'i Film Studio. Ensuring Hawai'i can operate its film infrastructure in a timely and predictable manner is essential to **supporting local businesses, workers, and long-term economic resilience**.

For these reasons, the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce **supports SB 3085 SD2** and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

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

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
8:30 AM – Room 423, HI State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT SB 3085 SD 2
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I FILM STUDIO

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 3085 SD 2**.

The Hawai'i Film Alliance (HFA) represents a broad coalition of local film and television professionals, union members, creative workers, production companies, small businesses, and allied industry partners who live and work here at home. Our membership spans the full production ecosystem and depends on reliable infrastructure to sustain their livelihoods.

Film and television production is an important economic driver that supports jobs, small businesses, and economic diversification. For more than two decades, the Hawai'i Film Studio at Diamond Head served as a cornerstone of this ecosystem, providing a base for long-running television series and numerous productions which in turn provided stable employment and consistent economic activity across the islands.

Since major series concluded in 2023, the studio has not had a long-standing tenant. During this period, many film industry workers have exhausted unemployment benefits, relocated elsewhere for work, or left the industry entirely. At the same time, Hawai'i faces increasing competition from other regions that offer efficient access to production facilities and predictable administrative processes.

SB 3085 SD2 removes an unnecessary barrier from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's (DBEDT) authority to manage and lease film studio facilities efficiently. DBEDT is best positioned to ensure these publicly funded facilities remain active and productive. Streamlining administrative processes will help protect the State's existing investments and allow the studio to function as intended.

Reliable access to soundstage infrastructure is often a decisive factor when productions choose filming locations. Enabling timely and efficient leasing of the Hawai'i Film Studio will increase



Hawai'i's competitiveness, attract new productions, and generate economic activity that benefits residents, local vendors and surrounding communities.

Beyond economic benefits, an active studio strengthens Hawai'i's creative workforce and ensures that local storytellers have access to professional production resources.

SB 3085 SD 2 will help restore full use of the Hawai'i Film Studio, protect public investment, and support long-term economic opportunities for Hawai'i residents.

Alongside other measures supporting the film industry, SB 3085 SD2 signals that Hawai'i values its workforce, respects its investments, and intends to remain a viable production hub. At this moment, action is necessary to prevent further erosion of capacity and to position the state for renewed growth.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committees to **pass SB 3085 SD 2**. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-3085-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:44:16 AM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genaro Hale Gualdarama	Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand In support of bill SB3085.

SB-3085-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:31:40 AM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Spelman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill! We need more studio development. Growth in production space will add greatly to the future industry not only for production but post production as well.
Mahalo!

SB-3085-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:14:21 PM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dean Des Jarlais	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this legislation.