

BILL012(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 166

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 9

I wish to comment: 3

Name: Emily Perry	Email: emily.perry@tpl.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Trust for Public Land	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 12, 2024 @ 03:34 PM
Name: Karla Noa	Email: karlanoa@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 13, 2024 @ 10:35 AM
Name: Sky Pierce	Email: info@fx-group.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: FX Group	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 13, 2024 @ 12:04 PM
Name: Laura Sode-Matteson	Email: lauramatteson@mac.com	Zip: 96727
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 14, 2024 @ 07:56 PM
Name: Chris Lee	Email: chris@chrisleemedia.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 09:54 AM
Name: Kala Crowell	Email: crowellkala@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 10:46 AM
Name: Cheryl Sakai	Email: cheryl.sakai@icloud.com	Zip: 89113
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 11:19 AM
Name: Eliza Talbot	Email: eliza8482@gmail.com	Zip: 96837
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 11:46 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Aloha City Councilmembers,</p> <p>I am testifying in my personal capacity as the Vice Chair of the Economic Revitalization Commission for the City and County of Honolulu. I am also a former employee of the City and County, and I am familiar with the City's budgeting process.</p> <p>In my professional capacity, I work closely with Hawaii's business community every day and can offer a unique perspective about the importance of the OER. I wish to share my support for the OER team and its work and convey the importance of funding the important mission of this office, which is to build the financial resiliency of our entire Oahu community by uplifting underserved residents and businesses.</p> <p>I was appointed in 2022 to serve on this inaugural body and became the Vice Chair of the Commission. I'm honored to be included in this group of highly accomplished Commissioners. They represent Hawaii's small businesses, the financial sector, the tech industry, nonprofit and more. During my time as a Commissioner, I spent countless hours working with the OER staff and the other commissioners to research and understand the economic challenges and opportunities facing Oahu's community. We read every relevant economic data report and strategic plan published in the last few years. We have heard directly from stakeholders</p>		

who are engrossed in the work of supporting our low-income and ALICE families and our small businesses. It is a true privilege to be associated with the high caliber team of the OER.

Since the inception of this office in 2020, it has been singularly focused on enhancing Oahu's economic resilience. There is no other agency in the city dedicated to meeting with and supporting local businesses, establishing accelerator programs in underserved communities and building programs that will actually diversify our economy.

OER evolved out of necessity during the pandemic and immediately became one of the most dynamic and service-oriented agencies in the state during the crisis. In 2020, OER worked with more than 3,000 small businesses and provided essential communications for our Pacific Islander population. But OER was not a newly created agency, it replaced the Office of Economic Development, which was previously funded through general funds. Since its establishment, OER has been primarily funded by COVID relief funding. This is because its mission is dynamic and versatile enough to pivot and serve the entire community during a crisis.

OER has distributed millions of dollars in critical programs for our community including rental aid, business recovery grants, pivot grants, agricultural grants and the good jobs program. In 2024, OER is leading Oahu's initiatives to expand broadband access and digital literacy. It is a common misconception that broadband access is sufficient on Oahu, however, the rural areas of West Oahu and Windward Oahu still do not have equitable access to wireless infrastructure. These are important roles the City plays for our underserved communities through OER.

Today, Honolulu is the primary economic driver in Hawaii, however, OER has one of the smallest teams dedicated to economic development when compared to the other counties. Other counties have used general funds to grow these programs for years and they are skilled at using their experience to attract federal grant funding. OER serves a critical role by enhancing the County's ability to attract external funding opportunities. OER will soon host the City's first dedicated grant contractor which will be critical for attracting federal grants for all agencies in the County. Most large municipalities throughout the nation have more than one dedicated grant administrator.

OER was uniquely positioned to receive \$186,000 from DBEDT under the State Small Business Credit Initiative to launch the Oahu Small Business Connector. This is a gamechanger for underserved businesses and entrepreneurs because it connects them to technical resources that will help scale up and grow their businesses. This is a critical tool which will boost opportunity and reduce economic disparity in underserved areas. OER is also a partner with other organizations that foster workforce development and work-based learning opportunities. This is critical to develop a skilled workforce and expand income horizons so we can keep our residents here in Hawaii.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate, there is no other agency in the city dedicated to meeting with and supporting local businesses, establishing accelerator programs in underserved communities and building programs that will actually diversify our economy. Although we may not be in the pandemic era, the state's economy is still reeling. More importantly, our local businesses are facing more challenges than ever before. Every industry is faced with workforce shortages, higher costs of doing business and mounting uncertainty about the future of Hawaii's resident and tourist populations. OER and its team serve a critical and essential role for the City and County by supporting local businesses and communities. An investment in OER is an investment in Oahu's future economic recovery and resiliency.

Name: Timmy Chinn	Email: timmylocations@gmail.com	Zip: 96713
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 02:27 PM
Name: Hanna Readman	Email: hanna.readman@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 09:03 PM

Testimony:

Adding a mall in this area will NOT be beneficial to the community. The traffic that persists daily already without the presence of a shopping mall is awful. Increasing the amount of people incoming into the area even more will make this congestion significantly worse and decrease the quality of life of the local residents who need to commute to work and take their kids to school.

Name: Kevin Foster	Email: foster_kevin@me.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 09:17 PM
Name: Irish Barber	Email: alohairish@iatse665.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: IATSE Local 665	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 17, 2024 @ 07:38 AM
Name: Amira Soliman	Email: amira.soliman@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 17, 2024 @ 08:28 AM



HAWAII

1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1512
Honolulu, HI 96813
tpl.org

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Dr. Rachel Sprague
Pūlama Lāna'i

Jan Sullivan
Oceanit

Honolulu City Council
530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony for the Honolulu City Council
Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 10:00 AM

RE: BILL 12 (2024) – EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY2025

Dear Council Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Emily Perry, and I am the Parks for People Program manager for the Hawai'i Trust for Public Land (TPL) office. I am testifying in support of the Department of Community Services budget for the Office of Grant Management which supports the Grants In Aid (GIA) Fund. We are humbled that for FY2025, the TPL proposal for 'A'ala Park has been recommended for funding by the Grants In Aid Advisory Commission to the Honolulu City Council. The programming and park improvements at 'A'ala Park will improve the health and quality of life for the surrounding communities.

'A'ala Park is a beautiful park with a storied history reflective of Hawai'i's history and ethnic diversity. Community led park improvements, programming, and usage provide an opportunity to uplift community voices and empower residents to improve their health and quality of life. Study after study reveals that access to the outdoors and green space improves human health, happiness, and well-being, beyond the measurable benefits of reducing pollution, cooling air temperatures, and filtering stormwater. By building, improving, and activating quality parks in underserved areas and partnering with local residents, we are investing not only in economic growth, but in community growth.

TPL has gathered the attached letters in support of City Council approval of the Grants in Aid Advisory Commission's Report on proposals recommended for funding by the GIA. We thank the Department of Community Services, Grants in Aid Advisory Commission, and Honolulu City Council for their continued efforts to support community-led development.

Mahalo,

Emily Perry, Parks for People Program Manager
Trust for Public Land



AMERICAN
Savings Bank

PO Box 2300
Honolulu, HI 96804-2300

April 1, 2024

Honolulu City Council
530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Letter of Support for FY25 GIA Trust for Public Land Grant

Dear Chair Watters and members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my support for the grant application submitted by The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to the City and County of Honolulu FY2025 Grant In Aid program for 'A'ala Park.

This grant will increase programming and fund park improvements at 'A'ala Park, which will improve the health and quality of life for the surrounding community. 'A'ala is a beautiful park with a storied history reflective of Hawai'i's past and ethnic diversity. However, the park has earned a negative reputation over the years due to neglect and crime, causing many families to stay away.

We are encouraged by TPL's commitment to 'A'ala Park and are very supportive of their work to revitalize a central gathering space that can be used by the 18,000+ residents who live within walking distance to the park. Through an exhaustive effort involving community surveys, meetings and discussions, TPL has identified multiple renovations, programs, and uses that will improve 'A'ala Park and welcome residents back.

A park is more than a place where people gather and play sports; it's also a place where residents and workers can escape the hustle-and-bustle of urban life. Study after study reveals that access to the outdoors and green space improves human health, happiness, and well-being beyond the measurable benefits of reducing pollution, cooling air temperatures, and filtering stormwater. By building, improving, and activating quality parks in underserved areas and partnering with local residents, we are investing not only in economic growth, but in community growth.

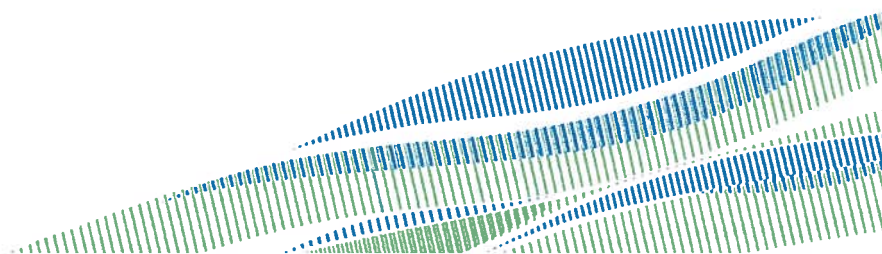
In conclusion, we extend our full support to TPL's grant application and commend their dedication to advancing the project at 'A'ala Park to turn the community's shared vision into reality.

Sincerely,

Beth Whitehead
EVP, Chief Administrative Officer



Member FDIC





Honolulu City Council
530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Letter of Support for FY25 GIA Trust for Public Land Grant

Dear Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the grant application submitted by The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to the City and County of Honolulu FY2025 Grant In Aid program for 'A'ala Park. The programming and park improvements at 'A'ala Park will improve the health and quality of life for the surrounding communities.

'A'ala Park is a beautiful park with a storied history reflective of Hawai'i's history and ethnic diversity. Community led park improvements, programming, and usage provide an opportunity to lift up community voices and empower residents to improve their health and quality of life. Study after study reveals that access to the outdoors and green space improves human health, happiness, and well-being, beyond the measurable benefits of reducing pollution, cooling air temperatures, and filtering stormwater. By building, improving, and activating quality parks in underserved areas and partnering with local residents, we are investing not only in economic growth, but in community growth.

This proposal aligns with Waiwai Collective's mission and values which are community-driven, providing space for educational and cultural programming, entertainment, and a collaborative network of members who want to be a part of a movement for positive change for Hawai'i and beyond. On January 13, 2024 we held an Urban Makahiki event at 'A'ala that was a celebration of community strengthening and cultural connections as a family friendly, multi-cultural event with cultural games, hula, martial arts, and other dance performances. This project at 'A'ala Park would further facilitate park improvements, providing an urban, green space in Downtown/Chinatown for similar future events.

In conclusion, we extend our full support to your grant application and commend your dedication to advancing the TPL project at 'A'ala Park to implement the community vision into reality.

Sincerely,

Mahina Paishon

Mahina Paishon
CEO & Cofounder, Waiwai Collective

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair, Honolulu City Council
And Members
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

My name is Karla Noa. I work in the film industry, primarily in the Locations Dept and it has provided me the opportunity to collaborate and work directly with and learn from the staff at the Honolulu film office and Walea Constantinau as I develop my craft. The office has facilitated my growth, helping me build more depth and knowledge and that has transformed my career to be able to take position of greater authority in a very short period of time.

I am writing to oppose the funding cuts proposed for the Honolulu Film Office. This office has helped production significantly and me personally as I pursue a career in film. They helped me to establish and develop business connections with agencies and industry professionals, taught me about stewardship and how to build relationships that helps a film project become a contributor to our local communities and organizations.

The Honolulu Film Office has assisted production including myself not just with permitting but also to connect and develop relationships with organizations, agencies, and professionals that are sustaining for the future of film in Hawaii. I've learned through Walea that I can develop relationships that are founded upon collaboration between entities and can transform communities through contribution. It is the reason production can be a contributing factor in a community and we minimize the impact we may cause in an area during filming.

The Honolulu Film Office and its staff has worked tremendously hard in connecting community leaders and organizations to develop mutually beneficial relationships with production and film to ensure a successful film shoot. It is this same ability to build connections that Walea and the film office uses to nurture long-lasting and influential relationships with the executive level of the film industry at the studios and senior producer levels. This is a relationship-oriented business, and the Honolulu Film Office understands this and operates with Aloha each day to help our industry grow, and that is good for everyone.

Respectfully, I am requesting that you restore funding to the Honolulu Film Office.

It will be extremely detrimental to the industry to cut the funding of the Honolulu Film Office because would negatively affect our future as local filmmakers.

Mahalo,



Karla Noa
Key Assistant Location Manager / Coordinator
Local 996



FX Group LLC
FEIN: 84-2250646
HI GET: GE-013-232-3840-01

TO:

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

I am writing to provide testimony in strong support of the Honolulu Film Office.

I have been a producer and location manager for nearly 20 years and work closely with the film office as a regular part of our business operations.

The film office is absolutely essential to the success of the entire film industry as well as all the small businesses, employees and vendors who work in and around the industry. If the film office were to cease operations, or lose funding and reduce it's scope of services, it would cripple the industry and hurt everyone associated with it.

To start, film offices everywhere play an essential role in supporting the industry both on a local, national and international level. The film office in any area is the first point of contact for many outside producers, location managers and scouts who are considering filming in that area. The office serves as a central hub of vital information. Everyone in the industry knows that the local film office is the best resource to start with when exploring the possibility of filming somewhere.

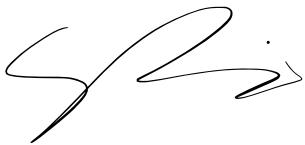
During the shutdown that happened during the pandemic, I worked closely with the film office (along with many others) to get everyone back to work. At a time when the world was reeling and everything was shut down, it was Walea in the Honolulu film office who was absolutely essential in getting the industry going again. Her efforts, together with many others, put hundreds of people and businesses safely back to work and brought hundreds of millions of dollars into the state before tourism even got started.

Once productions of all sizes (not just the large features, but all the photo shoots, documentaries, student films, etc.) have decided to shoot in the City & County, they need to get permits. Without the film office there would be no efficient system for processing film permits. This is probably where the film office is most crucial to the industry on a day to day basis. The timely and efficient processing of permits specific to the film industry is a vital component of the film commissioners duties. Without those permits, no one would be able to film here legally. Without that permit process, the City & County would also have no statistical or financial data on the industry. No one would know what's happening at a local level. The involvement of the film office from the start prevents unauthorized and irresponsible practices from occurring in the first place. For every issue or complaint that you might have heard about a production, there are 500 other jobs which went smoothly because the film office provided permits, guidance, support and advice from the beginning. As a local company which frequently hosts clients from around the world, I cannot overstate the importance of the film office in making sure visiting productions act responsibly, sensitively and with respect. The unregulated free for all that would occur without the film offices is scary to imagine.

Finally, it's important to note the essential role the film office plays in supporting the individuals and small businesses which do not have the ability to responsibly promote the islands to producers around the world. Film offices serve an important marketing role for the industry as a whole. By attending conferences, sponsoring events, and being visible at industry gatherings, the film office is directly supporting everyone back home who would not otherwise be able to afford doing it themselves.

The Honolulu Film Office, the film commissioner and other staff are absolutely essential to the film industry and thousands of people here. Please increase their funding and support an industry which is good for the 'aina and the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SP', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sky Pierce,
Owner, FX Group LLC

4/14/24

Tommy Waters, Chair
And Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

It has come to my attention that the Honolulu Film Office budget has been proposed for a budget reduction. I was shocked when I learned this might occur. Please let me share why this office is vital to attracting, hosting and managing the wide scope and breadth of the industry on Oahu and the budget cuts should be restored.

I was born and raised in Hawaii and very fortunate to find a successful career in the Entertainment Industry. I have worked and scouted all over the United States and Internationally on major motion pictures, including many projects in Hawaii, (ie: Battleship, Jurassic World 1 & 2, Jumanji, Jungle Cruise, and Chief of War.) for some of the largest production companies in the world including Disney, Universal, Sony and Apple)

If you want a successful production, any form of filming, whether it is a large major motion picture, a TV show or a commercial it requires multiple levels of involvement from the local film office. Oahu is the hub of Hawaii's production industry and virtually all of the filming requests that shoot on Oahu interact with the Honolulu Film Office, who greets them with Aloha and guides each one so they can have a successful shoot that meshes well with the needs of production and the needs of the community.

Having worked with many film offices in the US, across Europe and Asia, Honolulu's film office is an excellent example of what a great film office should be. While representing the Aloha spirit of Hawaii, it is very efficient and most importantly quick to respond and find answers, solutions and/or resolve issues.

Filming is a creative process, and it can be complicated and fluid. Walea Constantinau and her staff are dedicated professionals who I have been fortunate to have their assistance in finding filming sites, mitigating potential issues, and if need be, problem-solving together, working with production to find equitable solutions.

I know first-hand the economic benefits filming creates in Hawaii. As someone born and raised on Oahu, I am especially supportive of the local employment, providing living wages to many, as well as increasing vendor and business opportunities the industry provides. The industry has benefitted many businesses and individuals but we could not do this without a well run and well respected film office in the hub of Hawaii's film industry.

The Honolulu Film office is a major contributor to how Hawaii is so positively perceived globally as a filming destination. How filming requests are handled, and how problems are solved, is reflected in the reputation of a film office and Honolulu's film office is very well respected. I would honestly be very concerned if there was no film office. It would make me wonder if we could get the support we needed which would be a big red flag for producers and the studios.

As someone who truly cares about the success of Hawaii's film industry, I am respectfully asking you to please reconsider the proposed cuts to the film office and restore their funding.

Mahalo for your time,



Laura Sode Matteson
Supervising Location Manager
IMDB: NM0559849
lauramatteson@mac.com
818/383-0427

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chief and Presiding Officer
And Members of the
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202

Subject: Bill 12 (2024) – COMMENTS

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council,

My name is Chris Lee and I am a Honolulu resident and the Founder and Director of the Academy for Creative Media System at the University of Hawai'i. I write today as a private citizen in regards to the funding of the Honolulu Film Office.

Honolulu is fortunate to have a seasoned and trusted Film Office with extensive industry connections and experience. Whether it's dealing with the networks and studios, independent filmmakers or assisting our students with their permits, the Honolulu Film Office is always there to help. And they do so always with aloha.

Honolulu is also blessed with a vibrant and growing production industry, in part because of the excellence of the Film Office. A review of the direct spend numbers show the scope of this enormous economic engine for the city that the Film Office must manage.

Hawai'i's production industry has climbed to a DBEDT reported average of \$396 million dollars in direct spend per annum, the vast majority of which is generated on O'ahu. In DBEDT's latest figures from 2022, the total Hawai'i film production direct spend was \$420.04 million (includes qualified tax credit spend and non-tax credit spend).

The breakdown by island is as follows: O'ahu: \$354.88 million; Hawai'i County: \$39.32 million; Kaua'i County: \$12.56 million; Maui County: \$13.28 million. With Hawai'i household income generated at \$168.02 million and tax revenue generation of \$45.36 million, DBEDT estimates the total economic impact from film production on our economy at an impressive \$726.68 million. Most of that is generated in and for the City and County of Honolulu.

The University of Hawai'i is entering into negotiations to partner for the state's first major studio complex at UHWO. The goal is to grow that \$400 million a year in production to \$1 billion. That requires the full time services of the Honolulu Film Office.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Bill 12 (2024).

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Council Chair
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

I am writing in strong opposition to the amendment that would cut the funding for the film office.

I am a key assistant location manager working in the film industry for 8 years. I am born and raised on the island of Oahu and have been lucky enough to stay on island to continue to work. I am also a member of the local Teamster 996 union.

I work closely with the City & County Film Office in permitting for the various filming productions. I have worked in TV shows, movies, as well as helping in smaller productions, each having their own various footprints and unique inquiries. I believe a large part of being able to film on island is due to collaborating with the City's Film Office. In my experience, about 80% of the permits I would usually submit have been processed through the City. I have great confidence in their knowledge and experience. They take the time to meet onsite and facilitate communication to better explain with Park Managers, Community members and Production on the best ways to proceed.

For example, for an upcoming project, we met with the Film Commissioner as well as the Park Manager about potential locations to film. They were able to give us information and recommendations on best areas that may work logistically for the Production as well as for the Parks and the community. We were able to narrow it down to 2-3 solid viable options to present to production. That kind of certainty is important as a large project plans to move forward. Productions have to make plans that end up locking them into a set creative direction so the ability to get the kind of preliminary info we got was so helpful.

The film industry has shown a steady increase in projects coming to the island to film over the last decade, too much for one person to handle. The addition of staff in the last couple of years to assist with the high volume of requests was long overdue. The prospect now of not having any staff due to cuts to the budget is daunting for the industry.

Because of this, I am writing in opposition to the suggested amendment, to reduce the budget of the Honolulu Film Office or require it to be funded federally.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kala Crowell', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kala Crowell

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Council Chair
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

I am testifying in strong opposition to an amendment to Bill 12 that would reduce or eliminate funding for the Honolulu Film Office.

My name is Cheryl Sakai, and I am an Assistant Location Manager and member of Hawaii Teamsters 996. I am proud to say that I was raised in Honolulu and have worked in the production industry for almost two decades, since 2006. My resume consists of a variety of local productions from various commercials, network episodic (CBS's "*Magnum PI*"), non-profit (PBS Hawaii's "*Na Mele*"), and major motion pictures (Disney's "*Lilo and Stitch*"). On every production, I have worked closely with the City & County of Honolulu Film Office, which is helmed by Walea Constantinau.

With the world-wide success of productions like, "*Lost*" and the "*Jurassic Park*" franchise, Hawaii has seen the positive impacts of the production industry. This is possible thanks to the City & County of Honolulu Film Office. From street usage such as a car chase on "*Hawaii 5-0*," to Jason Momoa walking through Heeiea Forest on "*Aquaman 2*," to a rescue scene on a sandy beach on "*Doogie Kamealoha*," the film office facilitates all of these city locations. They are often our first call when conceptualizing a location for filming, and they work closely with us until it is captured on camera. Hawaii has become a sought-after place to film on-location because this film office makes it possible.

On August 25, 2020, our production industry was issued a City and County Emergency Order 2020-25, from Mayor Kirk Caldwell. The order, "defines Film and Television production as an essential activity, and therefor allows this activity to operate." As an essential worker, I was able to return promptly to work in August of 2020 on a streaming feature film for Netflix, titled "*Kate*." One of the first points of contact was the Film Office, as they paved the way for our production to begin collaborating with various city locations for filming. This would not have happened if the film office had not worked with the industry to figure out how to safely return to work... it's a validation of the economic importance the production industry is to the city. And a confirmation of how much we rely on the film office to keep the production wheels turning. Oahu was one of the first places in the country to be able to go back to work and because of that, we attracted series like *Doogie Kamealoha* and others. The film industry spent over \$300 million in our economy at a when we really needed it.

I am not only testifying in strong opposition of Bill 012, but I would like to argue for more funding, for this essential office. Recently, they were able to hire two employees who were able to expertly execute our requests while thinking of the needs of the public. The film office serves both the people of Honolulu and the film industry. We need this essential office to be able to do our work.

Thank you for your consideration,



Cheryl Sakai
Assistant Location Manager

4/12/2024

Tommy Waters, Chair
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chairman Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council:

I was shocked and disappointed when I recently learned that a budget reduction has been proposed for the Honolulu Film Office, given what a necessary and vital component of the local film industry this office provides.

My name is Timmy Chinn, and I have worked in the film industry both on the mainland and at home in Hawaii, where I have worked in location management in the film industry for the past 18 years, and as a Hawaiian, I feel proud and grateful to have been fortunate enough to have been able to find a successful career in the local film industry.

I have managed and helped to manage numerous film projects, all the way from low budget local projects, to music videos, commercials, major television show and feature films. Some of the shows I have worked on include Pirates of the Caribbean, Jurassic, Battleship, Jumanji, Hawaii Five-0, Magnum PI, and recently, Chief of War. I worked on the TV series Hawaii Five-0 for 9 years, and was its location manager for 7 year. I was also the Supervising Location Manager on Magnum, PI during its first season.

Every project I have worked on has worked hand in hand with and relied heavily on the Honolulu Film Office. The Honolulu Film Office is an absolute necessity, our local film industry could not survive without the work they do. On every project that I have worked on, I would estimate that 75%-90% of all film permits issued have been processed through this office. On shows such as Hawaii Five-0 and Magnum PI, this often means approving 2-3 permits per day, and at times even more.

Filming in Hawaii can be intense, complicated and extremely fast paced, especially when it comes to episodic TV shows such as Hawaii Five-0, Magnum PI, and NCIS. The Honolulu Film Office, under Walea Constantinau has done an exemplary job over many years of assisting and enabling us to do our jobs efficiently, not to mention the many "after hours" and last minute changes that sometimes need to be made because of extenuating circumstances.

While a critical element of what the Film Office does is to supply film permits to any given film company, Walea does not take this job lightly, and permits are not handed out merely as requested. The film office has to perform a balancing act in weighing out the requests made in any given film permit application with the needs and safety of the community, which is not often an easy task, but being local, and knowing the needs of both the community and the film

industry, Walea and her staff excel at this. As such, the Honolulu Film Office is an indispensable link between the film industry and the local community.

I am against requiring the Honolulu Film Office being Federally funded, and I certainly do not want to see its budget cut in any way.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' followed by a long horizontal line.

Timmy Chinn
Location Manager

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair, Honolulu City Council
And Members
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

I have worked in the film industry in the US and Hawaii for over 20 years, five of which have been in Hawai'i on network television series like MAGNUM PI and movies like FINDING OHANA, and am writing in support of the Honolulu Film Office and how important the office is in the process and success of filmmaking on O'ahu.

I have worked in the great cities of Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Boston, and now Honolulu. The Honolulu Film Office is the most personnel and hands-on that I have experienced. If were not for the organization, direction, and collaboration with your film office, it would be impossible to work together both interdepartmentally, inter-governmentally and with the local communities to successfully mitigate the impact and facilitate the benefits of the film industry.

All cities and locations pose challenges on every level, but those are mostly operational and logistical. The additional layer in Hawaii due to its unique nature, history and make-up of the communities of the Hawaiian Islands requires an additional level of care and attention to detail that the Honolulu Film Office has in spades, which is helping to drive the industry's success here.

It's hard to imagine filming on O'ahu without the film office providing the resources needed to adequately help facilitate filming the business districts, neighborhoods, and rural areas of the island to help navigate the complexities of on location filming or the resources needed to reach out to the larger film community to keep productions coming to Oahu.

It's impressive to see how much care the Honolulu Film Office takes marketing to the industry beyond your shores to ensure that Hawai'i is on their minds as they weigh the pros and cons of their filming options. The film industry is a relationship-oriented business and is very competitive. The producers and executives who make the decisions on where to film have many choices. Your Honolulu Film Office realizes this and acts upon it. Walea at the Honolulu Film Office extends the same personal, hands-on approach she and her team uses in Hawai'i in the marketing efforts of the office in order to keep 'work in the pipeline.'

For all the reasons above, please restore the funding for the office that does so much for so many.

Sincerely,



Kevin Foster
Location Manager
Local 399



IATSE Local 665

HAWAII'S TECHNICIANS

for

FILM, TELEVISION, STAGE AND PROJECTION

Since 1937



**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES, MOVING PICTURE TECHNICIANS, ARTISTS AND ALLIED CRAFTS
OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND CANADA, AFL-CIO, CLC**

April 17, 2024

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chief and Presiding Officer
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

HEARING: Budget Bill - Wed., 04/17/24 at 10:00 AM
RE: BILL 12: Relating To the Executive Operating Budget
Testifying in opposition to proposed cuts to the Honolulu Film Office

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the City Council -

My name is Irish Barber, and I am the Business Representative and head of IATSE Local 665. Our local represents over 800 members and 700 trainees who work behind-the-scenes and backstage on feature films, television shows, concerts and conventions across all of the Hawaiian Islands.

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed cuts to the Honolulu Film Office.

I have worked in the film industry for nearly 40 years and have worn many hats. I have worked as a Locations Manager, Production Supervisor and Transportation Coordinator on many Feature films, TV series and commercials. In all of these positions, including my current position at IATSE Local 665, I have had the pleasure to work directly with the Honolulu Film Office, it's office director Walea Constantinau and the staff in various capacities at various times through my career. **In short, as an industry, we need this office.** Just like the construction industry needs a building department, the film industry needs a film office to market, liaise and facilitate.

There are few government employees who truly understands our business and work as hard for our industry as the Honolulu Film Office staff does. Walea is often the first person a producer calls when considering a film project for Oahu, and **she and her staff do the utmost to ensure the film comes to Hawai'i.** They attend numerous film events to promote filming in Hawai'i and build valuable relationships with industry executives to bring work to our islands.

Once here, Walea and her seasoned and knowledgeable staff work day-to-day with multiple city and production departments to ensure the filming is a success for everyone. They attend neighborhood board meetings to answer questions and ensure film productions are respectful of local residents.

The Honolulu Film Office is an important liaison between the industry, the City and the community. She has a very hands-on leadership style. I have seen Walea and her staff on set at 5am to lead the road closure briefing with Production and HPD, late at night in a neighborhood to ensure a simulated house-burning scene goes smoothly and on weekends to help an independent film about the 442nd Battalion get the footage needed for the ending of the film.

It is this attention to the details and hands-on approach that keeps neighborhoods happy and productions coming back.

This long-standing office, founded more than 30 years ago, deserves your full funding support. Respectfully, please do not cut the funding for an office that is making a difference in growing our economy, creating jobs and doing so with great humility and respect for Hawai'i.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irish Barber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Irish" being more prominent than the last name "Barber".

Irish Barber
Business Representative
(808) 479-1770 Mobile
alohairish@iatse665.org

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
And Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council:

I am testifying in strong opposition to the suggested amendments to reduce funding for the film office.

My name is Amira Soliman and I am a Location Manager and member of the Local Teamster Union 996 here on Oahu. I have been working consistently in TV, Film, and Commercials since 2010 on a variety of small and big budget productions.

As a member of the Locations Department, we work very closely with the Honolulu Film Office; from scouting feasible yet practical locations to fit the unique creative needs of a production, to concisely laying out our plan so that a permit can be processed, to working through the logistics with various other city and country offices to see our request through. Cutting funding to this office would be detrimental to our industry and heartbreaking to my department.

The Location Manager on a project gets called in at the very early stages of production, before the film company knows 100% that they are going to film in Hawaii. I have worked closely with Walea Constantinau, the Film Commissioner, to present viable options to these companies to get them here. I've been in situations where I'm at a deadend, and Walea will have a flood of ideas. I've attended events with Walea on the mainland where I have firsthand seen her engage with producers and creatives who are interested in bringing film to Oahu. Cutting funding will directly affect the Film Office's ability to entice producers to bring projects here which employees SO many local people and brings in so many dollars into our economy.

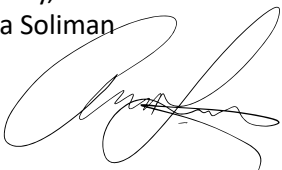
On the MONARCH tv series (Apple+, 2023), we had a huge challenge that the Film Office helped us to overcome. Firstly, the Film Office handled the initial call from the producer and successfully brought the production here based on images and conversations of what Oahu has to offer. During the pre-production, one of the locations that we were going to film had recently experienced a landslide so there were many environmental factors to overcome. The Film Office turned what could have potentially been a very bad situation into an opportunity for success. All answers pointed to no but with creative problem-solving, we were able to proceed.

The Film Office not only supports and advocates for the private film companies, they empower and protect the City and County offices that we work with on all film shoots. Walea and her staff do not always give us the answer that we want because she is tough and scrutinizes what we ask for. The office has the big picture and wants to see the longevity of the film industry flourish by setting boundaries and protecting us from ourselves. Even in a disagreement, I know that Walea is doing her best by being a strong liaison that is watching out for the best interests of both parties.

This is not an office that is easily replaceable or duplicated. The work is hard, engaging, and not for the faint of heart. The staff in this office care deeply about bringing creative, diverse, work to Oahu. I take a lot of pride in my work, and I know they do the same. When I call the Honolulu Film Office, day or night, I know they will take my request or question with care, dedication, and follow-through.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Amira Soliman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amira Soliman', written over a light blue horizontal line.