



SACRED LIGHT 'OHANA

March 12, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued service to our communities. I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of SB2580 SD2.**

My name is La'akea Ching. I am a Hawai'i-based creative producer, filmmaker, and the Founder and Executive Director of Sacred Light 'Ohana, an organization dedicated to building global pathways for Hawai'i's creative community through workforce development, education, and culturally grounded creative programming. Our work helps local creatives access global-level opportunities while remaining rooted at home and grounded in their identity.

Through my work in film production and documentary storytelling in both Hawai'i and international settings, I have seen firsthand how directly incentive structures shape where productions land. Conversations with producers and production companies make clear that Hawai'i's locations and talent are genuinely compelling, but when competing states offer stronger credits, the math drives decisions in ways that are hard to overcome. Without a competitive incentive, productions that could be made here, along with the workforce opportunities they carry, continue to go elsewhere.

SB2580 SD2 raises the credit, expands eligibility to streaming platforms, and extends the program through 2038. These are changes that directly affect whether productions choose Hawai'i over competing states that have already made these moves.

For local crew members, emerging filmmakers, and organizations like Sacred Light 'Ohana working to build sustainable creative careers in Hawai'i, productions choosing to film here create direct workforce opportunities. **But the impact goes beyond jobs. When major productions are present in our communities, they create moments of exposure that shape what young people believe is possible for themselves.** A student who visits a set, watches a crew work, or sees their island on a global screen can have their entire career trajectory changed by that experience. This has a direct trickle effect on the shaping of Hawai'i's creative identity and the future of who tells our stories. Every production that lands in Hawai'i because of a competitive incentive structure is an investment in the people and communities that make Hawai'i's creative economy possible, and in the next generation of local talent who will carry it forward.

Mahalo again for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important measure. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2580 SD2.

With appreciation,

La'akea Ching

Founder & Executive Director