



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented to the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.

by

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on behalf of

Vassilis L. Syrmos, Vice President for Research and Innovation  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 1237 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII FILM INDUSTRY

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH), would like to provide comment on SB 1237 that seeks to enhance the state's successful motion picture/television/streaming production industry by extending the current film production tax credit from 2032 to 2038.

Hawai'i's Film Production Tax Credit has been a success. "...Since the passage of the film credit in 2006, spending in Hawai'i on TV/film productions has soared, with inflation-adjusted spending increasing by 116 percent between 2007 (\$164.5 million) and 2019 (\$355.6 million). This is much larger than the overall increase in Hawai'i real gross domestic product over the same period, a modest 17 percent..." – as noted by Sumner La Croix and James Mak in their March 2021 UHERO report, *Understanding the Role of the Hawaii Film/TV/Digital Production Tax Credit in Diversifying the Hawaii Economy*.

The Academy for Creative Media (ACM) at UH now supports 16 programs across all ten campuses. Thanks to the foundational and continuing support of the Legislature, students and graduates from ACM on every island are contributing to Hawai'i's creative economy with living wage jobs. With the stable and reliable film tax credit it seeks to extend, SB 1237 will help to keep these students here, and at the same time, help to diversify the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.