

Aloha!

I'd like to start my comments by first thanking the distinguished body in attendance here today.

Your time and efforts in making Maui a great place in which we can live and make a living doing what we love is never unappreciated.

Hearing direct testimony from those active in the film, tv, commercial print, advertising and digital filmmaking and other areas of visual production can only prove to be positive steps forward in seeing Maui continue to grow as a successful "Film friendly" USA destination and crafting effective actions to help Maui thrive in the ares of entertainment and commercial production.

My name is Brad Starks and since moving to Maui from New York some 6 years ago, I was first able to support myself here as a photographer. After making some connections during my first year, I was able to get hired as a freelance production assistant on commercial TV and film shoots with local production companies such as Paul Ehman Productions, Hana Productions and other smaller start up companies. Along with Kathy, Brian and Glenn, we 4 represent a very small piece of the very large and culturally diverse number of talented Maui locals that dedicate our professional careers to production here on Maui.

Since that first year I've been able to branch out and act as Unit Production Manager, coordinating producer, associate producer and creative director on several projects that have originated here on Maui and also countless freelance projects that have come from the mainland and Europe. I also find time to manage two social media web platforms designed to provide free information on local productions looking for local hires and resource information. From it's humble beginnings, Neighbor Island Film Group, and NIMTC have grown and currently have a combined following of well over 1,500 industry professionals.

During 2016, I was brought onto a MTV reality project entitled "ARE YOU THE ONE" with Lighthearted Entertainment Productions based out of Los Angeles. I was hired very early in the first days and worked directly with the team of executive producers and production coordinators while they organized all facets of how the show would function here on Maui.

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As I was one of the advanced hires and had gained trust with the producers, I was able to provide several names of hard working Maui individuals that led to them being hired as Production Assistants, Grip and Electric crew members, Catering, and the names and contact information of several other local vendors that were needed to produce a major reality show with a budget upwards of \$8 million dollars.

The home they choose was in a residential neighborhood of Haiku. After an intense 2 or 3 weeks of prep time, filming began and went on for a full 6 or 7 weeks. These were full 12+ hour days for a cast and crew of as many as 80 people. There are many times when Maui is over looked for productions of this size and caliber because it is said " Maui doesn't have the personal or infrastructure to handle ANY big production." I am pleased to report to you all today that that accusation is categorically false. Seeing how hard many of our local Maui industry professionals worked and conducted themselves was beyond impressive. I lost count of how many times our local Grip and Electric crews went above and beyond what they were asked to do and in many cases found ways in which to help Lighthearted Entertainment producers do things more effectively which ended up saving time and their clients bottom line.

With large TV productions like this one, there are always challenges. After about 3 weeks into shooting, there were a few hick-ups.

Scheduling outside shooting at the primary house during odd times during the day and some after sunset, demanded not only perfect weather but reasonable cooperation from surrounding neighbors. Other issues occurred with increased visitation by outside vendors. With a crew that size, food deliveries and timely pick-ups of garbage, supply deliveries and repair crews were required and necessary.

While it is true that some residents filed formal complaints about noise, from most of the accounts that I have heard after the fact, many have been grossly exaggerated for effect and blown somewhat out of proportion. I was personally on set with production coordinators when a fair amount of occurrences happened and I found them to be extremely receptive to neighbors requests and everyone was made aware of any complaint in a timely matter during production crew meetings and direct texts. I recall hearing a call go out to Tracy Bennett and soon thereafter, he and Mayor

Arakowa made personal visits with the producers and went “door to door” to communicate with those neighbors directly that had concerns.

Freelance shoots like the “ARE YOU THE ONE” TV shoot are great for Maui and for the hundreds of film, TV, and production professionals that call Maui their home. The working budget for the production I was told was \$10 million dollars and \$8 million was spent right here in the county of Maui. The “ARE YOU THE ONE” show not only provided me with financial security and employment for over 3 months but also gave me new contacts with mainland professionals that I continue to get referrals and advance word of other Maui bound productions. The last 3 months of 2017, I have been booked solid from visiting mainland productions that got my name based on the work I did on the 2106 reality show.

I’m very lucky in that I’m able to talk with clients before, during and after they leave Maui. All of them have nothing but positive things to say about their experiences here as compared to other locations they’ve been to. In all the conversations I’ve had, they say that the People....The people of Maui.... were the one thing that shined above the one of a kind locations, hotels, food and beaches. It was the “Aloha” that they experienced here that was the one reason why they would consider coming back here to work on Maui over Oahu.

In order for Maui to continue to be successful in this way, we need to all be partners in streamlining practices and procedures to find common ground between those that make Maui their home and those that come to bring opportunity and economic growth to our county. It is my belief that with reasonable rules and regulations put in place, Maui has every chance to exceed the income its made during it’s best recorded earnings in the area of commercial shoots and or events. After viewing the bill that will be put before you, I see great potential and attention paid to the very things that need to be addressed in order to get things moving in a great direction.

It is my sincere hope that the distinguished members of those here today will review whats written in the bill and consider the future work possibilities for the Maui film community and keep in mind those that seek to continue doing good work and doing whats “Pono” for everyone here on Maui.

Mahalo.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Arakowa', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.