



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

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July 7, 2025

Ms. Cynthia Lallo, Chief of Staff  
Office of the Mayor  
County of Maui  
Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793

Dear Ms. Lallo:

Subject: Bill 47 (2025) - Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) response to Maui County Council, Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development

Please find responses to the questions received via email from your office on June 19, 2025, from Maui County Council, Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair.

- 1. The strategic plan outlining Maui County's intended approach for participating in the broader Hawai'i Creative Economy Collaborative;**
  - a. In addition to the response requested from County of Maui, Office of Economic Development (OED), the Creative Industries Division (CID), DBEDT offers the following clarification. The function of the Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) is intended to build a multi-year, county-state strategic economic plan which includes film industry development as a key facet of the overall economic development strategy for a thriving creative economy statewide. This will benefit all jurisdictions as well as integrating each county's County Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), and industry trends.

Key focus areas for the collaborative work with OED and county film offices are:

- Strategic Planning: short and long term for industry growth/sustainability.
- Skills and workforce development are tied to the vision/strategic plan.
- Business Development and marketing.
- Creative Hawai'i online information portal and business listings/directory.
- Framework for future State/County funding collaboration.

**2. Any related documents, as applicable, outline the governance structure, project selection process and anticipated funding arrangements.**

- a. MOA is a foundational framework for the activities above and serves to formalize the collaborative relationships between partners.
- b. Currently there is no formal reporting structure.
- c. Business development and marketing opportunities are determined between the film offices on an annual basis. Counties determine their priorities with their allotted budgets as does the state film office. Shared costs for trade shows or conference participation are determined as their county budgets allow. To support any limited funding, DBEDT CID has funded in part or in whole, industry business development functions with organizations such as Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), Association of International Commercial Producers (AICP) and American Film Market and Conferences.
- d. Anticipated funding includes department executive branch requests through Legislative supplemental and biennium years. Currently, CID and Hawai'i Film Office (HFO) have supported with the minimal, existing annual marketing funds from base budget for marketing and workforce development.

We look forward to implementing the partnership with our county economic development partners and their film offices. Should you have further questions, please contact me at 808-586-2355 or Georja Skinner, Division Chief, Creative Industries DBEDT at 808-291-8073 or [Georja.skinner@hawaii.gov](mailto:Georja.skinner@hawaii.gov).

Sincerely,



James Kunane Tokioka  
DBEDT Director

c: Georja Skinner, Creative Industries, DBEDT  
Office of Economic Development  
County Film Offices

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

This MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) is effective as of \_\_\_\_\_, by and between, the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), and its Creative Industries Division (CID); the City & County of Honolulu, Office of Economic Revitalization (OER); the County of Hawai‘i, Office of Research and Development (ORD); the County of Maui, Office of Economic Development (OED); the County of Kaua‘i, Office of Economic Development (OED) and their respective state and county film offices, with the mission to strengthen Hawai‘i’s film industry, build a collaborative framework to advance workforce, facilities and infrastructure development to strengthen Hawai‘i’s creative economy.

Therefore, this agreement will set forth the: 1) areas of partnership; 2) define financial resources to execute strategic economic development and marketing initiatives; 3) formalize county and state film program data collection and reporting and 4) workforce development and career readiness to support job creation. These recitals define the parameters of the future work taken on by this working group to be known as the Hawai‘i Creative Economy Collaborative (HCEC).

### RECITALS

WHEREAS, the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, Creative Industries Division (DBEDT/CID) is the State’s lead agency focused on developing Hawai‘i’s creative economy, acting as a business advocate for Hawai‘i’s creative, film, media, arts and entertainment industries; and

WHEREAS, DBEDT/CID workforce development initiatives, and infrastructure development strategies expand the business acumen of Hawai‘i’s creative entrepreneurs and creative sector workforce strategic pipelines for skills development with community organizations and;

WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu, Office of Economic Revitalization is creating an economy for O‘ahu that is more diverse, equitable, and filled with good jobs that care for our people and place;

WHEREAS, the County of Hawai‘i, Office of Research and Development has a mission to imagine, invest in and collaboratively create a sustainable, equitable and thriving Hawai‘i Island;

WHEREAS, the County of Maui, Office of Economic Development, works in partnership with the community to support economic recovery especially after the Lahaina and Upcountry wildfires; strengthen and diversify the economy by supporting existing businesses and assist in the attraction, development, and expansion of new businesses and events that will in turn provide new jobs for the community of Maui;

WHEREAS, the County of Kaua'i, Office of Economic Development was established by and within the County of Kaua'i to work in partnership with the community to create economic opportunities toward the development of a healthy, stable, and balanced economy for the residents of the County of Kaua'i; and is responsible to provide technical and financial support, as feasible, for both large and small business establishments or existing and emerging new industries which offer full employment for Kaua'i's residents; and

WHEREAS, the parties agree that the missions of these entities would be furthered by formalizing a collaborative structure to advance 1) strategic planning to grow Hawai'i creative economy and an ecosystem of support, 2) provide skills development for the creative workforce, 3) advance community economic development strategies across all creative sectors, 4) develop facilities and infrastructure for collaborative creative business development and 5) execute a joint marketing strategy with shared financial and in-kind resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOA is to define and execute on the following:

- a. Shared Marketing Efforts: Formalize a state and county marketing plan on an annual basis, identifying the working relationship between county OEDs and state DBEDT and its Creative Industries Division, which includes the Hawai'i Film Office, to share financial support for joint projects as determined by the parties;
- b. Strategic Road Map: Develop and execute a strategic road map for statewide economic development specific to the creative industries and film sectors;
- c. Workforce Development: Build upon and align projects, initiatives and policies within the statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to execute plans which support statewide workforce and economic development initiatives;
- d. County and State Film Office Integration: In addition to each county's individual marketing and operations, and in support of joint marketing efforts, align county film offices and the state's Hawai'i Film Office under the unified "Film Offices of the Hawaiian Islands" brand when marketing jointly, which provides shared information and services. Further refine and strengthen state and county film permitting systems and align metrics reporting, and;
- e. Funding Sources: As funds from CID become available, whether general funds or from a special fund source such as HRS 201-113, the Film and Creative Industries Development Special Fund (HFCF), the state will assist counties through advancing funds for shared costs to execute these economic development activities identified herein.

## II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

- 1) Develop a short and long term strategic plan to strengthen resident jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities which comprise Hawai'i's creative economy sectors; taking into account sustainability practices and being conscientious to Native Hawaiian culture and practices.
- 2) Implement workforce, talent and skills development in conjunction with education partners including University of Hawai'i to include Good Jobs workforce development program through 2026, O'ahu Good Jobs and Career and Technical Education (CTE) DOE and other government and nonprofit organizations, to increase jobs and entrepreneurial growth across film, media and creative sectors;
- 3) Develop annual budgets ahead of the start of a fiscal year to determine shared costs associated with conferences, business development activities out-of-state film and content markets, and related efforts for business development marketing the counties and state;
- 4) Hawai'i Creative and Media Portal – Develop a budget and parameters to establish an online portal which may include the following:
  - a) Creative and film sectors metrics and data, contacts, directory.
  - b) Listing of skilled workforce and businesses supporting the creative sectors
  - c) Directory of facilities, contacts and services on all islands.
  - d) Centralized image database of location photos for each individual island.
  - e) Related information to support county and state marketing of Hawai'i to global businesses, distribution and licensing opportunities.
- 5) Workforce Development – Education-to-Jobs/Small Business Development Initiative
  - a) Work with State agencies responsible for workforce, economic development, education and non-profit organizations to build a strategic framework to build a curriculum-to-career pipeline for current and future jobs, along with business acumen for creative entrepreneurial development
  - b) Identify clusters of economic development opportunities to grow workforce on each island

## III. TIME OF PERFORMANCE

The term of this MOA shall commence on the Effective Date and remain in force until such time as the parties agree to terminate and/or funding is no longer available for these activities. Each party may terminate its participation in this Agreement by 30-days written notice to all parties.

IV. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The validity of this MOA and any of its terms or provisions, as well as the rights and duties of the parties to this MOA, shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Hawai'i.
2. Any modifications to this MOA shall be effective only upon the execution by all parties of a written Supplemental Memorandum of Agreement.
3. The facsimile, email, or other electronically delivered signatures of the parties shall be deemed to constitute original signatures, and facsimile or electronic copies hereof shall be deemed to constitute duplicate originals.

V. AGENCY CONTACTS

- A. The contact on behalf of DBEDT/CID:

James Kunane Tokioka, Director  
Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism  
Ph: (808) 586-2355  
Email: [james.tokioka@hawaii.gov](mailto:james.tokioka@hawaii.gov)

- B. The contact on behalf of City and County of Honolulu:

Amy Asselbaye, Executive Director  
Office of Economic Revitalization  
Ph: (808) 768-6638  
Email: [amy.asselbaye@honolulu.gov](mailto:amy.asselbaye@honolulu.gov)

- C. The contact on behalf of County of Maui:

Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
Office of the Mayor  
Ph: (808) 270-7710  
Email: [mayors.office@mauicounty.gov](mailto:mayors.office@mauicounty.gov)

- D. The contact on behalf of County of Hawai'i:

C. Kimo Alameda, PhD, Mayor  
Office of the Mayor  
Ph: (808) 961-8211  
Email: [Michah.Alameda@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:Michah.Alameda@hawaiicounty.gov)

E. The contact on behalf of County of Kaua'i :

Nalani K. Ka'auwai Brun, Executive Director  
Office of Economic Development  
Ph: (808) 241-4946  
Email: [oad@kauai.gov](mailto:oad@kauai.gov)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this MOA to be effective on the date specified above.

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James Kunane Tokioka, Director  
State of Hawai'i  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

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Amy Asselbaye, Executive Director  
City and County of Honolulu  
Office of Economic Revitalization

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Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
County of Maui

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C. Kimo Alameda, PhD, Mayor  
City and County of Hawai'i

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Nalani K. Ka'auwai Brun, Executive Director  
County of Kaua'i  
Office of Economic Development

MOA Between DBEDT, CID; City & County of Honolulu, OER; County of Hawai'i ORD; County of Maui, OED; and the County of Kaua'i, OED and respective state and county film offices

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Approved as to form:

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Christopher Leong, Supervising Deputy Attorney General  
State of Hawai'i  
Department of the Attorney General

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Geoffrey M. Kam, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
City and County of Honolulu  
Department of the Corporation Counsel

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Kristina Toshikiyo, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
County of Maui  
Department of the Corporation Counsel

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Renee Schoen, Corporation Counsel  
County of Hawai'i  
Department of the Corporation Counsel

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Matthew Bracken, County Attorney  
County of Kaua'i  
Office of the County Attorney

## BFED Committee

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**From:** Skinner, Georja <georja.skinner@hawaii.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 7, 2025 3:49 PM  
**To:** BFED Committee  
**Cc:** Kirsten E. Szabo; Yukilei Sugimura; Raquino, Rachael A; Yamamoto, Keliann Y  
**Subject:** RE: Bill 47 (1) Agenda item for 7/8/25 - MOA revision and Responses  
**Attachments:** 7-7-25 Signed Memo Maui County Response-Bill 47 (1) + Updated MOA for signatures.pdf

**Importance:** High

Aloha Committee Clerk,

RE: Bill 47 (1)

Please find attached the responses to BFED Chair Sugimura's questions and revised MOA for this measure before Maui County Council hearing tomorrow, 7/8/25.

Should you have further questions, please contact me via email or cell 808-291-8073.

Mahalo,  
Georja

Georja Skinner, Chief Officer  
**Creative Industries Hawaii**  
Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism  
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Honolulu, HI 96813  
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*"Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else ever thought"*  
~ Albert Einstein