



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

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Friday, February 23, 2024
11:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HB 1939 HD1
RELATING TO THE ARTS.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HB 1939 HD1 that appropriates funds to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) to establish a statewide arts program, providing greater access to the arts for children and communities in need, with a focus on those affected by the Maui wildfires.

The music, arts and culture of these islands are the heartbeat of Hawai'i. The arts can be beneficial in helping affected communities move toward recovery. This is of particular importance given the devastation experienced by our keiki and their families in the wildfires of 2023.

Existing outreach programs in Arts Education and related initiatives of the SFCA can bring arts-based healing and self-expressive activities for our youth through drawing, writing, music-making, and dance into their recovery work. With community health practitioner alliances in Maui County, this initiative for young survivors to safely process their experiences can be instrumental in their healing process.

DBEDT and its Creative Industries Division support HB1939 and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with SFCA, where needed, to initiate this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
to the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024 Conference Room 308 at 11:30AM**

**HOUSE BILL 1939 H.D.1
RELATING TO THE ARTS**

No. 1 Capitol District Building
250 South Hotel Street
Second Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

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Dear Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) respectfully **SUPPORTS** H.B. 1939HD1 which appropriates funds to the SFCA to provide greater access to the arts for children and communities in need, with a focus on those affected by the Maui wildfires.

State Arts Agencies play an important role in traumatic recovery efforts for artists and art programs. Specifically, as an information provider, identifying funding sources, developing partnerships, and connecting people and resources. The long-term response to mental health is an area where culture and the arts can make a difference. It gives communities a purpose and a unifying rallying point. Culture provides a sense of well-being and helps people cope.

ARTS Healing

To date, the SFCA is supporting out-of-school arts engagement activities for those affected by the Maui fires: kupuna, veterans, those experiencing houselessness, rural communities, and other communities of people that may not always have access to arts education experiences. The SFCA has partnered with the Department of Health and Hawai'i Community Foundation to administer arts and healing programming.

The community expectation and demand for funding support through relief support outweighs the staff and funding resources of the SFCA. In order to develop a long-term recovery plan, the SFCA will require additional funding resources to support the Maui culture and arts sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



February 22, 2024

To the House Committee on Finance:

I am writing this letter in strong support of House Bill 1939 (HB1939), which proposes to appropriate funds to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) to develop partnerships with arts organizations and establish a statewide arts program to provide greater access to the arts for children and communities in need. I have witnessed the vital and significant impacts of SFCA's initiatives, both through my capacity as Director of Maui Arts & Cultural Center's Schaefer International Gallery and as a Maui resident and community member.

Here on Maui, we have closely felt the devastating impacts that the August 2023 wildfires have had on the community – impacts that have been most pronounced for those who suffered family loss or were directly displaced, but that have also had a ripple effect on the island as a whole. In the wake of this tragedy, we have also seen firsthand how important the arts can be as a source of healing and as a channel for emotional expression, whether through different initiatives that have taken place at Maui Arts & Cultural Center or efforts led by other non-profit and volunteer groups around the island.

We strive to offer our gallery exhibits and programs as safe spaces that are accessible to community, and since reopening in the aftermath of the wildfires, we've received a number of comments from visitors of all generations who have stated how these various art experiences have been restorative and helped them to process the circumstances. Given Maui Arts & Cultural Center's prior work with SFCA, I have great confidence that, should HB1939 pass, SFCA would be able to develop a meaningful initiative to provide art programs to children in need and disaster-impacted communities, with a focus on those on Maui who have been affected by the wildfires and with an eye for cultivating a foundation of essential support for future times of need.

I highly support the provisions listed in HB1939 and encourage you to recommend this significant piece of legislation for passage.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Yukio Clark
Director, Schaefer International Gallery

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My name is Robert Pollock, executive director of Ebb & Flow Arts in Hawai'i. I strongly support HB 1939 that would add funding for SFCA's Arts programs particularly for Healing.

In 2022, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity—\$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations, which leveraged an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. The impact of this economic activity is far reaching, supporting 2.6 million jobs, generating \$29.1 billion in tax revenue, and providing \$101 billion in personal income to residents. AEP6 (the authoritative Arts and Economic Prosperity Study - <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic-prosperity-6>) sends a strong signal that when we support the arts, we are investing in economic and community well-being.

However the Arts are essential in more profound ways than the material, economic, and bureaucratic. Imagination and creativity are uniquely human traits. Through our senses we experience colors, forms, sounds, and motion. We transform these objects of the senses into powerful, emotional, intellectual and healthily creative works. Such activity humanizes us and distinguishes us from the rest of the animal world. Such artistic activity enlivens our spirits and nourishes our soul with its beauty and freedom.

Art has always needed outside support: state, church, aristocratic, foundation, corporate, philanthropic, etc. If a market economy could alone sustain Art, then famous artists such as Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, German composer Franz Schubert and American author Herman Melville would have been rich men. But they made little money from their art during their lifetimes.

Art is a survival tool. There are countless stories of survivors from the Holocaust and other disasters who attended concerts or

viewed exhibits, or heard a poetry reading that allowed them to enter the realm of Spirit and transcend the horrors of their subjugation. They survived because of Art. We must place the enlivenment of our spirits and nourishment of our souls as high a priority as the necessary sustenance of our bodies. Body is a function of Spirit. The experience of Art transcends and includes the experience of surviving. We must integrate Art into our lives and in all sectors of the society, private, civic and government. If we do not, then the reason for surviving disappears. Art reminds us of the priority of things - of what is most important in life. It pulls us away from the dark, destructive societal forces that create the "death spiral."

HB-1939-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:17:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Edwards	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill!

HB-1939-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:17:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Mehlich	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I'm supporting the HB1939 HD1 Relating to Arts for children on Maui affected by the wildfires. Art is a nonverbal way to receive support after a traumarising event as a Maui Lahaina Fires are clasified. Children have a space to meet and individually to create a positive, autonom impact for themself in a group while expresing themself, making art. I personally participated in an art project and I was awarded with an exhibition and place at an art market and succesuffly sold my art. I made a lot of new friends throught art. Art brought me in places I have never expected. It's a new beggining.