



MINUTES
California Film Commission Board Meeting
June 20, 2025

IATSE West Coast Office
2210 W. Olive Avenue
Burbank, California 91506

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Wendy Greuel (Chair)
Josh LaFarga (Vice Chair)
Jennifer Gonring (Secretary)
Arturo Barquet
Brian Brokaw
Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur
Andy Davis
Thom Davis
Steve Dayan
Karen Horne
Janet Knutsen
Kathy Le Backes
Alevtina "Alya" Michelson
Supervisor Holly Mitchell

CFC STAFF

Colleen Bell	Jerram Swartz (via zoom)
Leah Medrano	Heather Jennings (via zoom)
Joseph Cruz	Megan Fleming (via zoom)
Isaiah Sandoval	Richard Schlesing (via zoom)
Fanshen Cox	Alfonso Casey (via zoom)
Shadina Tiffith	Lorna Leslie (via zoom)
Shawn Wu	Lori Moilov (via zoom)
Leo Fialho	Jennifer Jackson (via zoom)
	Brandy Davis (via zoom)

GUESTS

Carolyn Angius – in person
Ed Duffy – in person
Josh Rubby – in person
Dan Taylor
Hannah Goldsmith
Melissa Patack
Matthew Curran
Marvin Sandoval
Leslie Rodriguez
Caroline Torosis
Kathy Garmezy
Eddie Robinson
Ryan Rettig
Matt Halvorson
Linda Kai



I. CALL TO ORDER and WELCOME; INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS/GUESTS – Wendy Greuel, Chair

Meeting called to order at 1:35 p.m., Roll Call and Attendance taken to establish quorum, Board members introduced themselves. A Land Acknowledgment was made by Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA) Initiative Manager Fanshen Cox.

II. CHAIR'S REPORT – Wendy Greuel, Chair

Chair Wendy Greuel welcomed members, guests, and staff, expressing deep appreciation for their dedication and commitment to California's film and television industry. Chair Greuel recognized the efforts of CFC staff, studios, and labor partners in advancing filming opportunities in the state.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Wendy Greuel, Chair

Motion to approve the Minutes from February 21, 2025 was made by Thom Davis, seconded by Steve Dayan. The motion was approved with all Board members voting in favor.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Colleen Bell, Executive Director

Executive Director Bell emphasized the pivotal moment facing the entertainment industry and California.

Governor Newsom's Budget Proposal: A historic proposal to increase the Film & TV Tax Credit from \$330 million to \$750 million annually—a bold investment in job creation, local economies, and maintaining California's leadership in global content creation.

Legislation in Motion:

- Highlighted two major bills: AB 1138 and SB 630, aimed at modernizing and expanding support for the entertainment industry.
- Assemblymember Zbur and Lauren Greenwood (GO-Biz Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs) were noted for their involvement.

Industry Impact:

- Legislative and budgetary efforts support:
 - Below-the-line workers
 - Students from underserved communities
 - Local businesses and filming destinations across the state

Strategic Vision:

- The Commission is encouraged to plan ambitiously and long-term, ensuring California remains a gold standard for innovation and opportunity in media production.

Board & Staff Recognition:

- New Board Member Announcement: Susie Schuster, Emmy Award-winning sportscaster and founder of *Women's Sports Now* on Roku, joins the Board (not present but will be welcomed officially at the next meeting).
- Staff Acknowledgment:
Special thanks to Leah Medrano, praised for her leadership and tireless work as Deputy Director

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of the Tax Credit Program, temporarily managing two roles.

- **New Hire Highlight:**
Welcomed Sean Wu to the DEIA team as a strong addition to the Commission's expanding efforts.

Operational & Facility Updates:

- **Office Renovation:** Progressing on budget and ahead of schedule. Staff continues to work remotely since November.

Permit Services Overview:

Category	% of Permits Issued	% of Film Days
State Parks	64%	59%
Caltrans	19%	25%
State Buildings & Facilities	17%	16%

- **Production Trends (Q1 2025 vs Q1 2024):**
 - Commercials: 116 Shoot Days (↑ 30.3%)
 - Television: 121 Shoot Days (↑ 142%)
 - Feature Films: 26 Shoot Days (↓ 69.8%)
 - Other (e.g., docs, student films): 297 Shoot Days (↓ 28.9%)
 - Total Shoot Days: 560 (↓ 12.9%)
- **Permit Scope:**
Covers 280 State Parks & Beaches, 125 Buildings & Facilities, and 257 State/Federal Highways.

Tax Credit Program Preview:

- Tax Credit Program Deputy Director Leah Medrano to present in detail.
- Program is adapting rapidly to challenges like wildfires, COVID-19, and labor strikes through force majeure provisions, which had never been used before this period.
- Positive influx of new projects, with the department remaining nimble and responsive.

Closing Remarks:

- Continued gratitude extended to all team members, with recognition of collaborative efforts over the past several months.
- The Commission remains committed to building a future where California remains a hub for innovation, equity, and economic opportunity in film and TV.

V. TAX CREDIT PROGRAM REPORT – Leah Medrano, Tax Credit Program Deputy Director

Tax Credit Program Deputy Director Medrano highlighted recent tax credit projects with a spotlight on one of the standout projects:

FREAKY TALES

- Independent feature filmed entirely in the Bay Area over 33 days
- \$8M in total spend
 - \$5.1M paid in wages to 1,500+ local crew members
 - \$650K spent on hotels
 - \$500K+ on local fees and permits
 - \$2.3M on local purchases and rentals

More Notable Productions:

Several recent releases and returning series continue to strengthen our program impact:

- Netflix's *Forever*
 - Renewed for a second season
 - First season generated substantial economic activity in California

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- *The Pitt*
 - Also renewed for Season 2
 - Season 1 hired over 683 cast and crew members

Orientation & Incoming Projects:

- 21 approved film & TV projects attended our recent mandatory orientation meeting
 - Held via Zoom
 - Attendees included producers, UPMs, line producers, studio finance executives, and production accountants
- 65+ individuals joined the session
- Many projects will film in Los Angeles—some entirely out-of-zone, bringing jobs and activity to underused areas

Program Participation Snapshot: Fiscal Year 5:

- 81 projects approved in FY 2024–2025
 - Compared to 37 in FY 2023–2024 → a 119% increase
- \$380M allocated in tax credits
- \$2.4B in California spending projected
- Over 15,000 cast and crew members employed
- Nearly 2,800 shoot days across the state

Example: The Residence

Transition to Program 4.0 – Senate Bill 132:

- Production Alert issued this week
- First TV application window set
- New Requirement: All approved productions must hire a certified set safety advisor

Set Safety Pilot Program:

- Administered in partnership with the Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee
- Training Program:
 - 36 safety courses totaling 70+ hours, including a course on risk assessments
- 225 applicants to date
 - 113 enrolled and currently completing coursework
 - Diverse pool: industry safety pros, experienced crew, safety experts from other sectors
- 27 individuals have already completed certification
- Certified list to be published by Contract Services and CFC websites
- Program evaluation to occur in 2029

DEIA Initiatives – Presented by Fanshen Cox

- Tax Credit Application Info Sessions
 - Outreach to BIPOC, AAPI, and underserved communities
 - In-person visits and listening sessions (e.g., BAMMS, BAYCAT, CAPE, JETRO San Diego)
- Community Engagement & Events:
 - *Hola Mexico Film Festival*
 - *Hollyshorts*
 - *Pat Brown Institute*
 - *Women's Production Society*
 - *ABFF Honors*
- Online Support:
 - Launching a Producer/Filmmaker Resource Table on the CFC website
- Annual DEIA Report:
 - Summarizing progress, challenges, and opportunities



Closing Remarks:

- The Film Commission continues to work toward a more inclusive, safe, and economically vibrant industry.
- Thanked all for their continued partnership and support as we expand our impact through Program 4.0 and beyond.

VI. APPROVAL OF SOUNDSTAGE FILMING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM REGULATION AMENDMENTS – Wendy Greuel, Chair

With no public comments during the Board meeting on the Regulation Amendments, Chair Greuel put forth a vote to approve the Amendments for the Soundstage Program Regulations. CFC Board member Thom Davis motioned for adoption of the Amendments for the Soundstage Program Regulations and authorized the Director of the California Film Commission to submit the regulations and supporting documentation to the Office of Administrative Law for formal review and approval. The motion was seconded by CFC Board member Steve Dayan and approved by all Board members.

VII. TAX CREDIT PROGRAM PENDING LEGISLATION UPDATE – Lauren Greenwood, GO-Biz Deputy Director of Legislative and External Affairs

Welcomed attendees and noted the dynamic legislative environment in Sacramento. Introduced Assemblymember Zbur to share details on the current legislative efforts.

Assemblymember Zbur:

- Expressed gratitude to CFC Executive Director Colleen Bell, GO-Biz Legislative Deputy Director Lauren Greenwood, GO-Biz Director Dee Dee Myers, the Governor, and legislative partners for their critical roles.
- Highlighted collaboration with Senator Allen as joint authors of companion bills (AB and SB) to avoid duplication and ensure alignment between the Assembly and Senate.
- Emphasized the bipartisan and multi-member support across both Houses, including key authors from both parties and new members invested in the industry.
- Stressed the legislative goals:
 - Preserve jobs and prevent runaway production.
 - Increase competitiveness with other states.
 - Maintain implementability within the current framework of the California Film Commission.
- Key bill provisions include:
 - Increase in tax credit rate to 35%, with an additional 5% uplift for out-of-zone productions (totaling 40%).
 - Expansion of qualified production types (animation, 30-minute scripted series, and large-scale variety shows).
 - Raising the per-production cap to \$120 million.
 - Increased allocation for independent productions from ~\$26 million to \$75 million.
 - Removal of ownership and lease restrictions for soundstage credits to encourage greater use.
 - New trainee incentives to promote inclusion of underrepresented groups, supported by labor coalitions despite political challenges.
- The bills are advancing toward a July 7th implementation deadline, with urgency clauses expected to fast-track enactment.
- Ongoing negotiations with the Governor's office resulted in some compromises, such as maintaining the current refundability percentage due to budget concerns.

Lauren Greenwood thanked legislative and labor partners for their efforts in modernizing the program.

- Noted that the bills make reboots eligible and adjust eligibility criteria for certain independent



productions.

- Highlighted expanded career training pathway providers and increased flexibility for the Film Commission to allocate funds more responsively.
- Anticipates the Governor's budget trailer bills will include these proposals shortly.

VIII. GUEST SPEAKER – Dan Seaver, Executive Director, Manifest Works

- Introduction and Background:
 - Dan Seaver founded ManifestWorks in 2013 as a direct response to his decade-long volunteer experience with incarcerated youth in LA County.
 - He has a background in journalism and government and served as a Commissioner for the LA County Probation Department (2014–2021).
 - His experiences exposed systemic inequities in the juvenile justice system, particularly related to poverty and race.
- Motivation Behind ManifestWorks:
 - Volunteering in probation camps revealed high incarceration rates of foster youth and minor offenses being criminalized, especially in poor communities.
 - Personal visits to incarcerated youth transitioned into a realization: the issue was lack of opportunity, not lack of potential.
 - Noted the disproportionate pathway from juvenile detention to adult prison (80%+ of the youth he met ended up in adult corrections).
- The Origin of the Program:
 - Inspired by the potential of a formerly incarcerated youth who thrived as a Production Assistant (PA) on a film set.
 - Saw an opportunity in the film and commercial production industries, where transferable skills (like resilience, leadership under stress) were underutilized.
- Program Focus:
 - ManifestWorks connects justice-impacted individuals with jobs in the film, TV, and commercial industries.
 - Emphasis on commercials as accessible entry points—shorter gigs, same industry professionals, and less gatekeeping.
- Challenges and Realizations:
 - Initial success stories were promising but revealed deeper challenges—cultural isolation, lack of support in predominantly white, upper-class workspaces.
 - Highlighted the importance of preparing individuals not just with job skills, but with social-emotional tools and workplace readiness.

IX. NEW BUSINESS – Wendy Greuel, Chair

Next Board meeting: October 24th in Los Angeles

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Wendy Greuel, Chair

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Wendy Greuel, Chair

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.