CALIFORNIA
Film Commission

California Film Commission Board Meeting
February 27, 2026
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Paramount Studios
5555 Melrose Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90038
1st floor Conference Room - Marathon Building

Commissioners In Attendance
Wendy Greuel
Joshua LaFarga
Jennifer Gonring
Arturo Barquet
Brian Brokaw
Cindy Capobianco
Rick Zbur
Andrew Davis
Thom Davis
Steve Dayan
Bonnie Goldfarb
Karen Horne
Janet Knutsen
Alya Michelson
Nikki Perez
Kerri Wood Einertson

CFC Staff
Colleen Bell
Yetee Osunsanmi
Leah Medrano
Fanshen Cox
Leo Fialho
Isaiah Sandoval
Trebien Bellows
Joseph Cruz
Shadina Tiffith

Guests
Arlen Valdivia
Joseph Lombardo
Joel Baral
Larry Laboe
Lauren Muniz
Lauren Pizer Mains
Tara Khonsari
Ed Duffy
Michael Glaser
Kevin McDonald
Puja Navaney
Melissa Patack
Oliver Bell
Gene Maddeus
Mario Suarez
Alfonso Casey
Shawn Wu
Richard Schlesinger
Kristi Cortez
Scott Lipke
Lauren Greenwood
Joshua Marín-Mora
Roxanne Messina
Heather Jennings
Jerram Swartz
Megan Fleming
Blake Kaiser
Lori Moilov

CALIFORNIA Film Commission

I. Call to Order; Welcome & Introductions - Wendy Greuel, Chair

Chair Wendy Greuel called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., welcomed Board Members, CFC staff, and members of the public, and confirmed a quorum was present.

II. Chair's Report - Wendy Greuel, Chair

Chair Greuel began by acknowledging the continued implementation of Program 4.0 and the significant amount of work undertaken by staff and Board members during this transition period.

She stated that the Commission is now operating within a strengthened framework following statutory updates and expanded funding and emphasized the Board's responsibility to provide oversight as the program moves from emergency regulations toward permanent rulemaking.

Chair Greuel noted that the Board's role includes ensuring transparency, statutory compliance, fiscal responsibility, and responsiveness to industry stakeholders. She referenced the importance of maintaining public trust, particularly as funding allocations and infrastructure investments increase.

She thanked Director Bell and staff for their extensive coordination efforts and preparation of materials for the Board meeting at Paramount Studios, noting that logistical coordination and operational readiness are essential components of effective governance.

Chair Greuel further acknowledged that production activity appears to be increasing and emphasized that the Board will continue to monitor outcomes carefully, including job creation, economic impact, and regional distribution of production activity across California.

She concluded by reiterating the importance of collaboration between government, industry, labor, and local jurisdictions to ensure that California remains competitive in a rapidly evolving global production environment.

III. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from 10/24/25 & 12/18/25 - Wendy Greuel, Chair

Chair Greuel reviewed the minutes from:
- October 24, 2025 Board Meeting
- December 18, 2025 Special Board Meeting (Emergency Regulations for newly eligible categories)

A motion was made and seconded to approve both sets of minutes. The Board voted to approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Director's Report - Colleen Bell, Director

Director Colleen Bell opened her report by formally welcoming Councilmember Nikki Perez to the California Film Commission. She provided a detailed overview of Councilmember Perez's professional background, including her tenure on the Burbank City Council since 2022, her service as Mayor from 2024–2025, and her experience in public service, workforce development, communications, and social services. Director Bell noted that Councilmember Perez holds a Master of Social Work from UCLA and undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Music Performance from UC Riverside. She expressed enthusiasm about the perspective Councilmember Perez brings to the Board.

Director Bell then turned to the broader outlook for production in California.
She stated that since the launch of Program 4.0 in July 2025, the Commission has completed two television application rounds and two film application rounds. Across those four windows, staff project:

- More than 25,000 cast and crew hires
- Over $4.17 billion in projected economic activity

- Approximately 4,000 filming days scheduled statewide

Director Bell emphasized that these numbers reflect measurable industry response to the statutory program updates and the historic increase in annual funding. She stated that “when California leans in, the industry responds,” and described the current data as a powerful signal that policy changes are having their intended effect.

She clarified that the full on-the-ground impact will not be immediate, as productions have up to 180 days from allocation to begin principal photography. As such, the visible surge in production will occur progressively rather than instantaneously. She described the current moment as a steady ramp-up and stated that the trajectory is unmistakable.

Director Bell also noted that while the majority of activity continues within the Los Angeles production zone, projects are filming outside the 30-mile zone. Though volume beyond Los Angeles remains comparatively modest in the initial rounds, she emphasized that even limited production activity provides meaningful local economic impact in communities that host only a few shoots per year, supporting hotels, restaurants, service providers, and small businesses.

Turning to regulatory matters, Director Bell reported that the Commission is actively engaged in the permanent rulemaking process for Program 4.0. She stated that stakeholder engagement will include labor, studios, independent producers, and community representatives. She emphasized that the goal is to ensure clarity, transparency, long-term stability, and alignment with statutory intent.

Director Bell then addressed the Soundstage Film and Television Incentive Program.
She reminded the Board that the Soundstage Program was funded at $150 million to incentivize long-term infrastructure investment. To date, 36 soundstages have been certified, representing a significant expansion of California’s permanent production capacity.

She reported that program funds are nearing exhaustion and that the Commission publicly announced last week—via production alert—that the program reached the 75 percent funding threshold, as required by statute. She emphasized that transparency in communicating funding milestones is essential to maintaining trust.

Director Bell clarified that once dedicated Soundstage funds are depleted, projects filming on certified stages will still receive a scoring incentive “bump” within the primary tax credit program but must compete within the broader allocation pool.

She concluded by noting renewed interest from studios, streamers, independent producers, and international partners. While acknowledging that competitor jurisdictions continue to invest aggressively, she expressed confidence in California’s creative workforce, infrastructure, and century-long storytelling legacy.

Director Bell closed her report by thanking the Board for its dedication and stewardship, stating that the Board’s guidance has a direct impact on thousands of workers and businesses statewide.

V. Deputy Director’s Report - Yetee Osunsanmi, Deputy Director

Deputy Director Osunsanmi opened by thanking Director Colleen Bell and expressing appreciation for the opportunity to address the group, noting the continued enthusiasm and renewed energy surrounding the modernization of Tax Credit Program 4.0. The program’s updates are generating tangible momentum across the state. Community response has been strong, and stakeholders are reporting visible signs of increased activity, including higher hotel bookings and a noticeable uptick in production-related inquiries to crew members and industry professionals. These indicators suggest growing confidence in California as a production destination.

Deputy Director Osunsanmi also emphasized appreciation for the Governor's office, whose press releases have consistently highlighted the program's effectiveness and impact. This media coverage has helped reinforce the narrative that the updated incentive program is delivering measurable results.

The Commission welcomes opportunities to further share information about the program and encouraged stakeholders to notify the CFC of positive stories so they can help amplify those successes.
Outreach and education remain central components of the CFC's work. Through sponsorships, panels, and information sessions, the Commission actively educates stakeholders about film and television opportunities throughout California.

The CFC provides comprehensive support services including locations assistance, state permitting guidance, general production resources, and administration of the film and television tax credit incentive. The team positions itself as a statewide resource hub, capable of answering production-related questions or connecting stakeholders to the appropriate agencies and partners when needed.

Deputy Director Osunsanmi highlighted several recent sponsorships and partnerships. The CFC sponsored the California on Location Awards (COLAs), the San Quentin Film Festival, and LA Skins Fest. The Commission continues its sponsorship of New Filmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA), including events such as the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration and film festival. Additional engagements include the AME Bay Area Pop-Up, a one-day professional development event for Arts, Media, and Entertainment educators, and the Association of Women Directors. Upcoming sponsorships include the San Francisco Film Festival and the GI Film Festival.

CFC leadership has also participated in significant speaking engagements. Director Bell took part in a panel at the Ashes to Films Summit, marking one year since the devastating Southern California wildfires. The summit convened state, city, and county leaders, activists, first responders, and entertainment professionals to discuss recovery efforts and continued support for the film community affected by the fires.

Tax Credit Program Deputy Director Leah Medrano participated in a panel hosted by the DGA-Asian American Diversity Committee in Los Angeles, where she discussed the expanded Program 4.0 and its incentive enhancements.

DEIA Program Manager Fanshen Cox attended and spoke at the UCLA Anderson PULSE Entertainment, Sports & Technology Conference, serving on a panel titled "Financing the Entertainment Enterprise," which examined trends and challenges across entertainment, sports, and technology industries.

Permit Manager Leo Fialho strengthened industry relationships by attending Teamsters Local 399's "Meet the Managers" event, reinforcing ties with location managers and the broader production community in Los Angeles.

The CFC also supported the Women in Film / Slamdance event. Additionally, the Deputy Director Osunsanmi participated in panels and events in counties such as San Diego and other regions that are working to establish or expand local film initiatives to attract and support production activity.

Looking ahead, FLICS will hold its next board meeting in Sacramento, where members will meet with legislators to provide feedback on how the passage of AB 1138 is positively impacting communities statewide.

The CFC is also contributing to the upcoming May release of Location California and Location International magazines. Deputy Director Osunsanmi reminded the audience that the CFC employs two dedicated Locations Associates who assist productions seeking locations throughout the state and manage Cinema Scout, the Commission's comprehensive locations database.

The remarks concluded with an invitation for stakeholders to follow the Commission on social media platforms—Film California on Instagram and X, and California Film Commission on Facebook and LinkedIn—to stay informed about programs, partnerships, and upcoming initiatives.

VI. Permit Manager's Report – Leo Fialho

Permit Manager Leo Fialho presented the 2025 annual permitting report for filming activity occurring on State properties, including State Parks, State Beaches, State Buildings and Facilities, and highways under Caltrans jurisdiction. He reviewed regional comparisons, categorical breakdowns, five-year trend data, and overall permit processing totals.

For calendar year 2025, the Commission issued 1,480 permits representing 2,733 total filming days. A total of 2,044 permits were processed, including 374 cancellations, 62 denials (applications submitted for non-state properties), and 128 rejections due to date availability or site restrictions.

Mr. Fialho noted a modest downward trend in film days compared to prior years, which he attributed to a post-streaming expansion market correction and the effects of recent labor disruptions. He further reported that temporary access limitations in Malibu State Park and Leo Carrillo State Beach due to Highway 1 closures impacted activity during a three-month period.

Statistical Tables – 2025 Permit Activity

Regional Distribution (2025)

Region	Percentage
Northern California	25%
Central California	17%
Los Angeles County	29%
Southern California	29%

Permits Issued by Category (2025)

Category	Percentage
State Parks	70%
Caltrans	15%
Buildings & Facilities	15%

Film Days by Category (2025)

Category	Percentage
State Parks	60%
Caltrans	17%
Buildings & Facilities	15%

Permit Processing Summary (2025)

Metric	Total
Permits Issued	1,480
Film Days	2,733
Permits Processed	2,044
Canceled	374
Denied	62

Permit Activity 2025

Overview: 2025 permit activity reflects stabilization following industry contraction associated with labor disruptions and streaming market correction. While total film days show modest decline from prior highs, regional distribution remains balanced across Northern, Central, Southern California, and Los Angeles County.

Operational Observations:

- State Parks remain the primary filming category (70% of permits; 60% of film days).
- Caltrans and Buildings & Facilities each represent 15% of total permits.

• Temporary access restrictions in Malibu impacted limited coastal activity.
• Administrative processing totaled 2,044 permits statewide.

Policy Considerations:
• Monitor commercial production activity and cost sensitivity.
• Maintain interagency coordination with Caltrans and State Parks.
• Continue transparent reporting via public website updates.

Conclusion: Despite transitional industry conditions, state property filming remains active and geographically diverse. Ongoing monitoring and coordination will support continued production retention statewide.

VII. Tax Credit Program Report - Leah Medrano, Deputy Director

Tax Credit Deputy Director Leah Medrano provided a comprehensive update on Program 3.0 final project releases, Program 4.0 implementation progress, workforce impact metrics, regulatory timeline, DEIA compliance activity, safety provisions, and upcoming application windows.

Program 3.0 Final Project Highlights
Tax Credit Deputy Director Medrano began by highlighting several recently released projects under Program 3.0, noting their economic impact within California:

- Crime 101 – $40 million in qualified California expenditures; 315 cast and crew hires.
- The Pitt – Season 2 – More than $60 million in qualified expenditures; over 1,000 cast and crew hires.
- Paradise – Season 2 – $60 million in qualified expenditures; approximately 450 hires.
- Euphoria – Season 3 – Over $100 million in qualified expenditures; more than 700 hires.
- Michael (Lionsgate) – $120 million in qualified expenditures; ranked third highest expenditure project under Program 3.0.
- The Mandalorian and Grogu – Over $166 million in qualified California expenditures; more than 500 hires. (Noted as the highest-spending project referenced in the presentation.)

Tax Credit Program Deputy Director Medrano emphasized that these figures reflect qualified expenditures and not total production budgets.

Program 4.0 Status Update
Deputy Director Medrano reported that, to date:
- 101 projects have been approved under Program 4.0.
- $930 million in tax credits have been allocated.
- Projects are projected to generate $3.8 billion in California expenditures, including:
  - $1.5 billion in qualified wages.
- Total projected hiring: Over 20,000 cast and crew members.

She clarified that earlier referenced totals were slightly higher but had been adjusted due to project withdrawals resulting from scheduling, financing, or casting changes.

Job Growth Comparison (Program 3.0 vs. 4.0)
Deputy Director Medrano presented comparative data for the July–December period:
- Program 4.0 (July–December 2025): 101 approved projects.
- Comparable period under Program 3.0: 19 approved projects.

This reflects:
- 432% increase in approved projects.
- 287% increase in projected cast and crew hires.

She further reported:
- 4,179 total California principal photography days, including:

- 3,478 in-zone days
- 701 out-of-zone days

Filming activity is distributed across Northern, Central, and Southern California.

Soundstage Incentive Program Update

Deputy Director Medrano confirmed that:

- The Soundstage Program has reached the 75% funding threshold.
- Additional soundstages were recently certified.
- Remaining qualified motion picture applications under Phase B will be announced via press release on March 18.

Once Soundstage funds are exhausted, productions filming on certified stages will continue receiving scoring benefits but must compete within the main Tax Credit allocation pool.

DEIA Program Activity

Deputy Director Medrano reported that the DEIA team:

- Continues to provide enhanced Good Faith Effort guidance.
- Has six projects awaiting final assessment approval.
- Has 17 projects with completed work plans pending interim assessments.
- Continues monthly CFC Learn sessions.
- Is expanding the supplier diversity resource database.
- Will represent the CFC at an upcoming Supplier Diversity Expo.

Safety in Motion Picture Production (AB 1138)

Since the July 1, 2025 effective date:

- Over 215 individuals have completed the Safety Advisor training course.
- More than 25 approved projects have hired Safety Advisors.
- Both independent and non-independent productions are required to have a Safety Advisor under AB 1138.

Additional safety-related regulatory clarifications will be incorporated into the permanent regulations process, including animation applicability.

Permanent Regulations Timeline

- Emergency regulations effective: January 2, 2026.
- Working group sessions: March 13 and March 20.
- Submission to Office of Administrative Law: April 7.
- Notice of Proposed Action issued: April 17 (triggering 45-day public comment period).
- Board review and approval target: June 5.
- Final effective date: Mid-July 2026 (aligned with start of Fiscal Year 2 of Program 4.0).

Board Members engaged in discussion regarding animation “green light” notice requirements and consistency of reasonable cause provisions between animation and live action productions. Staff indicated those issues will be addressed during the permanent rulemaking process.

Upcoming Application Windows (FY 2025–26)

- TV Window (Animation + Competition Categories): Reviews underway; approvals announced March 18.
- Film Window Opens: March 2; approval letters April 13.
- Final TV Window: Opens April 6; approvals May 18.
- Final Film Window: Opens May 11; allocation letters June 22.

Staffing Update

Deputy Director Medrano welcomed Trey Bellows as a new member of the Tax Credit Program team.

VIII. Guest Speaker Report- Michael Glaser, Supervising Location Manager – *One Battle After Another*, Location Managers Guild International (LMGI), Teamsters Local 399

Mr. Glaser provided a field-level overview of production logistics in California, drawing on his experience filming *One Battle After Another* across multiple counties. He emphasized operational realities affecting production feasibility, including permitting processes, inter-agency coordination, and incentive structure considerations.

<u>Statewide Production Scope</u>
The production conducted extensive statewide scouting, researching approximately 90% of California's counties, physically scouting 15–20 counties, and filming in 9 counties. The project involved 400–500 locations scouted and over 100 final filming locations secured. Mr. Glaser described the project as unique in scale and noted that industry strike-related delays provided rare additional time for coordination with Caltrans, State Parks, and municipal partners.

<u>Operational Challenges</u>
Mr. Glaser identified several recurring challenges:
- **Access to Decision-Makers:** Smaller counties without established film infrastructure often lack streamlined contact pathways, causing delays incompatible with production timelines.
- **State Coordination:** Rapid and clear communication with Caltrans and state agencies is critical for highway closures, traffic modifications, and park access.
- **Permit Structure (FilmLA):** The current five-location cap per permit (with base camps counting as a location) increases administrative complexity and costs for productions filming at numerous sites. He noted this is both a financial and procedural burden.

<u>Incentive Considerations</u>
Mr. Glaser suggested that increasing the current 5% out-of-zone uplift could incentivize more filming in neighboring counties outside the 30-mile zone, helping offset travel and housing costs and expanding regional production activity.

<u>Smaller City Engagement</u>
To attract production, he recommended that smaller jurisdictions:
- Maintain updated, visually robust film office websites.
- Highlight key location categories.
- Engage directly with LMGI and Local 399.
- Build relationships with location managers to encourage repeat filming.

<u>Commercial Production</u>
During Board discussion, Mr. Glaser acknowledged concerns about commercial production leaving California. He noted that commercial budgets are more sensitive to rising permit and agency costs, reinforcing the importance of monitoring competitiveness in that sector.

<u>Key Themes for Consideration</u>
1. Improve municipal responsiveness in smaller counties.
2. Maintain strong coordination with Caltrans and state agencies.
3. Evaluate impacts of multi-location permit limits.
4. Consider adjustments to out-of-zone incentive uplifts.
5. Increase outreach to smaller jurisdictions.
6. Monitor commercial production trends.

IX. Public Comment

Chair Greuel opened the floor for public comment. Staff confirmed that no public comment requests had been submitted either in person or virtually at the time the agenda item was called. No public comments were made.

X. New Business

Under New Business, Board Members engaged in discussion regarding the status of commercial production activity in California.

Board Member Steve Dayan raised concerns about potential shifts in commercial production to other jurisdictions, including international markets, and emphasized the importance of monitoring competitiveness in that sector.

Board Member Bonnie Goldfarb noted that commercial production has historically been a strong and consistent contributor to California's production ecosystem and indicated that rising costs and administrative complexity may be affecting smaller commercial production companies.

Director Colleen Bell stated that staff could reach out to representatives of the commercial production community, including AICP leadership, to explore the feasibility of a future presentation to the Commission to provide data and perspective on current market conditions.

Chair Greuel concurred that commercial production trends warrant further review and encouraged continued engagement with industry stakeholders.

Additionally, the Chair reiterated the importance of:

- Circulating regulatory timelines to the full Board in advance of review periods.
- Notifying Commissioners of website updates and published reporting.
- Ensuring Board availability for upcoming regulatory approval meetings, particularly those requiring quorum for permanent regulation adoption.

No formal motions were introduced under New Business.

XI. Conclusion and Adjournment

Chair Greuel thanked CFC staff, Board Members, and guest speaker Michael Glaser for their participation and contributions to the meeting.

Director Bell acknowledged Paramount Studios for hosting the meeting and confirmed that a tour of the tax credit-supported production *NCIS: Origins* would follow adjournment for those Board Members wishing to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.