

Hawaii Arts Alliance Community Advocacy Call

Quick Advocacy Tips

March 5, 2025

[Hawaii State Capitol Website](#)
[Legislative Timetable](#)
[HB 450-HD3](#)
[HB 1378-HD2](#)
[How to Testify at the Legislature](#)

Frequently Asked Questions: Hawaii's Works of Art Special Fund, HB 450-HD3 & HB 1378-HD2 (Prepared 3.5.25)

1. What arts bills are still moving in the Hawai'i Legislature and what is the Hawai'i Arts Alliance's position on those bills?

SUPPORT:

[HB 450-HD3](#) represents a significant step forward for arts and culture in Hawai'i. This bill would transition the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) from the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) — a move that better aligns with SFCA's mission. Most importantly, **HB 450 protects the Works of Art Special Fund**, a dedicated funding stream that supports arts and culture programs across the state.

OPPOSE:

[HB 1378-HD2](#) started the legislative session with promise but has unfortunately evolved into a threat to arts and culture funding in Hawai'i. While the bill appears to create new funding for performing arts, **it severely restricts the Works of Art Special Fund**, jeopardizing sustained funding for all arts and culture programs statewide. The Hawai'i Arts Alliance strongly opposes this measure in its current form.

2. How does HB 1378-HD2 restrict the Works of Art Special Fund and SFCA funding?

Under HB 1378-HD2, the Works of Art Special Fund — which currently serves as a dedicated, reliable funding stream for the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) and its programs — would be significantly altered. Currently, 1% of state capital improvement project funds are automatically transferred into the Works of Art Special Fund, ensuring consistent, year-to-year support for the Art in Public Places Program, the Capitol Modern Museum, and grants to support artists and cultural programming statewide.

HB 1378-HD2 proposes **capping the revenue** and **shifting SFCA's operational funding away from this dedicated source** and instead relies on general fund appropriations and federal grants. This shift creates serious uncertainty:

- General fund appropriations are not guaranteed year to year and are subject to competing state budget priorities.
- Federal funds are also unpredictable, particularly under the policies of the Trump administration.

By eliminating the Works of Art Special Fund as a stable, recurring source of support, HB 1378-HD2 jeopardizes long-term investments in public art, artist grants, and cultural programs across Hawai'i, placing SFCA's core work at the mercy of unpredictable funding cycles.

3. Doesn't HB 1378-HD2 provide a one-time funding increase for the performing arts?

Yes, HB 1378-HD2 provides a general fund appropriation of \$1 million in temporary funding for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, with the "possibility" of additional funding for the performing arts. However, this temporary support comes at the expense of amending the existing dedicated funding source that currently sustains the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) and its programs. The bill provides little or no gain for the arts. In fact, with federal funding to the state already diminishing, shifting the arts to rely on general funds places arts funding in direct competition with other state priorities. In the event of a general fund shortfall, there would be no alternative funding source to sustain SFCA's staff or programs, putting the agency's very existence at risk.

The Hawai'i Arts Alliance sees this as a divisive approach and strongly encourages the arts and culture community to remain united in opposition to any proposal that pits different arts disciplines against one another.

4. Why is Hawai'i considering changes to sustainable arts funding at a time when federal support for arts and culture is at risk?

Federal funding for arts and culture is facing uncertainty, with potential cuts that could reduce overall support for the creative sector. Given these challenges, now is not the time to take risks with state funding or amend the Works of Art Special Fund, which has provided a stable, dedicated source of arts funding for decades.

At a moment when federal support is in jeopardy, Hawai'i has an opportunity to stand strong in its commitment to arts, culture, and heritage—not weaken it. (See the [Alliance's op-ed in Civil Beat](#) from 2/27/25.)

5. What impact will HB 1378-HD2 have on the economy of Hawaii?

Like any business, arts and culture depend on sustainable support, like the dedicated special fund. The arts are not just about creative expression – they are a major economic driver in Hawaii. More than 20,000 Hawai'i residents work in the creative economy, contributing to a \$3.3 billion industry that fuels small businesses across the state.

Frequently Asked Questions: Hawai'i's Works of Art Special Fund *(Prepared 2.26.25)*

1. What is Hawai'i's "1% for Art" law, and what did the 1967 legislation establish?

In 1967, Hawai'i became the first state in the nation to enact a "Percent for Art" law through the Art in State Buildings Law. This pioneering legislation mandated that one percent of the construction costs of new state buildings be allocated for the acquisition of artworks. The primary objectives were to beautify and humanize public buildings and to increase public access to the arts across the state.

2. How was the "1% for Art" law modified in 1989?

The 1989 amendment expanded the original 1967 law by establishing the **Works of Art Special Fund (WOASF)**. This expansion extended the one percent allocation to include not only the construction of new state buildings but also the renovation costs of state capital improvement projects. The amendment

aimed to broaden the reach and impact of public art throughout Hawai'i, ensuring that artworks were accessible in all state public places.

3. What programs and activities does the Works of Art Special Fund support?

The Works of Art Special Fund supports several key programs and initiatives:

- **Art in Public Places Program** – This program acquires and commissions artworks for public spaces, integrating visual art into state buildings to enrich Hawai'i's cultural environment.
- **Capitol Modern (formerly the Hawai'i State Art Museum)** – Located in downtown Honolulu, this museum showcases a diverse collection of public artworks, offering educational and cultural experiences for residents and visitors.
- **Maintenance and Conservation** – The fund ensures the upkeep, repair, and restoration of public artworks, preserving Hawai'i's cultural heritage for future generations.
- **Educational Initiatives, including Artists-in-the-Schools (AITS)** – This program connects professional artists with students, offering hands-on, culturally relevant arts experiences to ensure access to arts education statewide.

Keep Your Questions Coming!

We welcome your questions and will continue to update this FAQ document as the legislative session progresses. Mahalo for your engagement!