



Sheila de la Guerra Public Comment

From: Brent Sumner <instudio8@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 6:26 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Brent - Film Comm, Budget
Attachments: Brent - Film Comm, Budget .pdf

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From Brent Sumner

I respectfully submit this request for your consideration: to allocate funding for a Santa Barbara County Film Commissioner position. This is a key opportunity to invest in our region's creative growth.

WHY SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SHOULD FUND A FILM COMMISSIONER:

A Film Commissioner should not be viewed as an expense. It should be viewed as an investment in economic development for our local cities.

Every film, television, commercial, documentary, photography shoot, streaming production, and digital media project brings outside dollars directly into our local economy. Productions arrive with money already allocated and spend it immediately in the communities where they film.

A single commercial production can spend tens of thousands of dollars per day on hotels, restaurants, catering, fuel, transportation, permits, equipment rentals, security, construction materials, and local labor. Larger productions spend hundreds of thousands—or even more—of dollars during a shoot.

Those dollars are spread throughout Santa Barbara County.

The county benefits through hotels, restaurants, production offices, transportation providers, and specialized crew positions. North county benefits through ranch locations, agricultural properties, wineries, lodging, catering, construction support, and rural filming opportunities. Every production creates opportunities for local businesses, property owners, and workers.

Santa Barbara County is competing against hundreds of other film-friendly destinations. Productions today have more choices than ever before. If permitting is difficult, communication is fragmented, or information is hard to obtain, productions simply choose another location.

A Film Commissioner solves this problem by serving as a single point of contact. Instead of navigating multiple departments and agencies, producers have one office dedicated to helping them succeed. The commissioner helps coordinate permitting, identify locations, connect

productions with local businesses and crew, and remove obstacles that discourage investment.

The county has already seen the long-term economic value of filmed entertainment. Productions such as “Sideways” helped elevate Santa Barbara County's wine country profile and contributed to increased tourism and national visibility.

Santa Barbara County also has a unique advantage few regions can match. Historically known as "Hollywood before Hollywood" through Flying A Studios (1912), the county offers beaches, mountains, ranch lands, vineyards, forests, dunes, historic communities, and coastal scenery within a short driving distance.

The question is not whether Santa Barbara County can attract productions. The question is whether the county is **willing** to compete for them.

A Film Commissioner would help generate economic activity, create jobs, support local businesses, strengthen tourism, and showcase Santa Barbara County to audiences around the world. Even a modest increase in production activity could generate a return that far exceeds the cost of the position itself.

Simply put, a Film Commissioner is not a cost to taxpayers. It is an investment in attracting outside dollars into Santa Barbara County.

My perspective is grounded in years of direct experience in Santa Barbara County's film industry. I've worked as a location scout and for local location agencies, assisting productions like 'Death Proof' and 'G.I. Jane.' I've directed national Toyota commercials, injecting tens of thousands of dollars daily into our local economy. I've also served on the board of Visit Santa Barbara and worked alongside the Film Commission 2013-2016.

“Case Study: Los Angeles’ Proactive Action

Even major production centers are recognizing the need for dedicated film leadership. Recently, Los Angeles reinstated a “Film Liaison” to streamline permits and retain productions. If Los Angeles, with its vast infrastructure, must act to remain competitive, Santa Barbara County needs to do the same. A Film Commissioner would ensure we don't lose opportunities.”

Side note:

"If Santa Barbara County loses just 25 productions annually and each production spends an average of \$50,000 locally, that's \$1.25 million in direct spending lost every year. If the average spend is \$100,000, the loss doubles to \$2.5 million annually. The salary of a Film Commissioner is a fraction of that amount."

I encourage you to take a careful look at this opportunity and genuinely consider funding the film commissioner role. If you have any questions or need further input, I'm more than happy to help in any way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brent Sumner

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