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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

KA ʻOIHANA HOʻOMOHALA PĀʻOIHANA, ʻIMI WAIWAI A HOʻOMĀKAʻIKAʻI

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DEPT. COMM. NO. 300

DTS: 202512221538MA

December 29, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President and Members
of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's Report on Sister State Program, as required by Act 150, SLH 2006.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes, I am also informing you that the report may be viewed electronically at: http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/overview/annual-reports-reports-to-the-legislature/.

Sincerely,

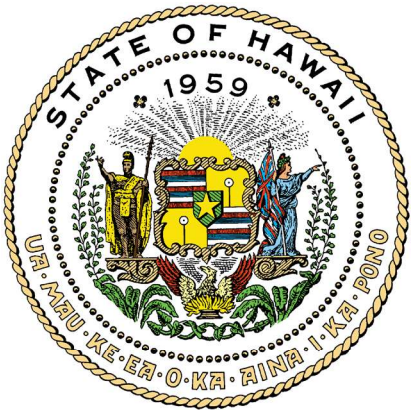
James Kunane Tokioka
DBEDT Director

Enclosure

c: Legislative Reference Bureau

Report of Hawai‘i’s Sister State Committee on the

State of Hawai‘i’s Sister-States



Business Development & Support Division
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

December 2025

A Report to the Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i
Prepared pursuant to Act 150, SLH 2006

Hawaiʻi Sister-State Committee

As of June 2025, the Hawaiʻi Sister-State Committee had four active members filling four of the five seats for this committee.

Jane Clement	Representing: Hawaiʻi State Association of Counties
Vacant	Representing: Native Hawaiian Cultural Organization
Kurt Osaki	Representing: Speaker of the House of Representatives
Jean E. Rolles	Representing: East-West Center
Eduardo Topenio Jr.	Representing: President of the Senate
Dennis T. Ling	DBEDT – Committee Administration
Mark Ritchie	DBEDT - Committee Administration

With three committee members constituting a quorum, the Committee has been able to meet and continue its focus on the following goals and objectives:

1. **The Committee takes an active role in evaluating prospective and current sister relationships, for both cultural and economic development reasons, with attention to fostering the most productive ties.**

   There is agreement that most successful sister relationships occur when:

   a. There is commonality between Hawaiʻi and the sister, primarily from geographical, historical, cultural or economic standpoints.

b. There are active and interested support groups, such as Chambers of Commerce, cultural and civic associations.
c. There are economic benefits for both sisters, such as increased numbers of visitors, or enhanced investment or marketing opportunities.
d. Close ties have been established between educational institutions of the two potential sisters, including both student and faculty exchanges.
e. There is a clear, strong governmental interest in not only forming, but maintaining the relationship.

2. **To assure the productivity and viability of a sister relationship, the Committee has further reviewed and revised the sister-state application form. The Committee also reviewed and revised the Policies and Procedures Manual which governs the process of nominating and evaluating prospective and existing sister-states.**

   In addition to completing the revised application form, additional requirements include:

   a. A letter from the Governor of the proposed sister.
   b. A designated point-of-contact person.
   c. Recent activity reports between Hawaiʻi and the proposed sister.
   d. Recommendations for future activities.

3. **The Committee periodically reviews the activities of each sister relation to determine which ties should be strengthened and which should be severed. The State has 19 sister relationships, dating back to 1981. Some relationships have been very active (e.g., Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Okinawa, Taiwan and Guangdong), while others have shown little or no activity (e.g., Azores Islands).**

On July 1, 2025, Act 158 (SLH 2025) took effect. The Act renames the Hawaiʻi Sister-State Committee to the Hawaiʻi Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission and amends its functions and membership. The Act further requires new members of the Commission to be appointed by the Governor, the President of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, with the advice and consent of the Senate. DBEDT is currently working with these leaders to finalize their appointments to the Commission.

SISTER-STATES (Chronological order)		
COUNTRY	**PROVINCE/PREFECTURE**	**YEAR ESTABLISHED**
Japan	Fukuoka	1981
Portugal	Azores Islands	1982
Greater China	Guangdong	1985
Japan	Okinawa	1985
Philippines	Ilocos Sur	1985
Korea	Jeju	1986
Greater China	Hainan	1992
Greater China	Taiwan	1993
Philippines	Cebu	1996
Japan	Hiroshima	1997
Philippines	Pangasinan	2002
Japan	Ehime	2003
Philippines	Ilocos Norte	2005
Philippines	Isabela	2006
Morocco	Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer	2011
Indonesia	Bali	2014
Japan	Hokkaido	2017
Japan	Yamaguchi	2022
Portugal	Madeira (Approved, but not signed yet)	202X

SISTER-STATES (Alphabetical order by country and area)		
COUNTRY	**PROVINCE/PREFECTURE**	**YEAR ESTABLISHED**
Greater China	Guangdong	1985
	Hainan	1992
	Taiwan	1993
Indonesia	Bali	2014
Japan	Fukuoka	1981
	Okinawa	1985
	Hiroshima	1997
	Ehime	2003
	Hokkaido	2017
	Yamaguchi	2022
Korea	Jeju	1986
Morocco	Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer	2011
Philippines	Ilocos Sur	1985
	Cebu	1996
	Pangasinan	2002
	Ilocos Norte	2005
	Isabela	2006
Portugal	Azores Islands	1982
	Madeira (Approved, but not signed yet)	202X

GREATER CHINA

Guangdong Province (1985)

In October 2025, the inaugural Reverse Coffee Mission brought 11 international buyers, to Hawaiʻi for a week-long event designed to promote Hawaiʻi's renowned coffee industry to global markets. Organized by the Synergistic Hawaiʻi Agriculture Council (SHAC), the Hawaiʻi Coffee Association (HCA), and the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), this mission played a key role in strengthening Hawaiʻi's connections with international coffee buyers, including a prominent buyer and a leading coffee media representative from Guangdong.

The mission offered a unique opportunity for international buyers to experience firsthand the exceptional quality and craftsmanship behind Hawaiʻi's coffee. Participants toured several of the Big Island's iconic coffee farms and roasters, exploring Hawaiʻi's distinct coffee production processes, sustainable farming practices, and the certification procedures required for exporting Hawaiʻi coffee to China.



Group photo taken during our tour of the Wet Mill Certified Center, where we observed firsthand the standards and practices in sustainable production.

The Reverse Coffee Mission also facilitated valuable networking between Hawaiʻi's local coffee producers and international buyers, fostering new business opportunities and

reinforcing Hawaiʻi's coffee as a premium product with strong potential in global markets, particularly in Guangdong and China. This mission marked a significant step in expanding Hawaiʻi's coffee industry and furthering its relationships with key international partners.

In July 2025, a Hawaiʻi delegation visited Guangdong Province to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Hawaiʻi–Guangdong Sister-State relationship. The mission, which included 21 participants, was led by key legislators: Senator Lynn DeCoite, Senator Henry Aquino, Representative Sean Quinlan, Representative Daniel Holt, Representative Justin Woodson, and Representative Scot Matayoshi. Ralph Gaston, Secretary of the Hawaiʻi Coffee Association, along with Kevin Olival, Associate Dean and Associate Director for Research at the University of Hawaiʻi Mānoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

The delegation visited Guangzhou, Zhongshan, and Shenzhen, where they met with Guangdong Province Governor Mr. Wang Weizhong to strengthen bilateral ties and explore new collaboration opportunities. A key highlight of the mission was a Coffee Tasting and Networking Event, which introduced Hawaiʻi's coffee industry to important stakeholders in Guangdong.



Mr. Ye Zheqin, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, and Representative Sean Quinlan at the event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the relationship between Hawaiʻi and Guangdong.

The group also attended a networking event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the sister-state relationship, emphasizing the ongoing importance of cooperation in agriculture, trade, and tourism. Additional activities included visits to Jinan University to discuss potential student exchange programs and to the Sericultural and Agri-Food Research Institute to explore innovative agricultural technologies. The delegation also toured Sun Yat-sen's former residence in Zhongshan and visited the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link Artificial Island Project, a major infrastructure initiative connecting Shenzhen and Zhongshan. This successful mission further strengthened Hawaiʻi's relationship with Guangdong, creating new opportunities for collaboration in trade, technology, education, and tourism.

Hainan Province (1992)

In October 2025, the inaugural Reverse Coffee Mission brought 17 industry professionals, including 11 international buyers, to Hawaiʻi for an exclusive week-long experience designed to showcase Hawaiʻi's premier coffee industry. Organized by the Synergistic Hawaiʻi Agriculture Council (SHAC), the Hawaiʻi Coffee Association (HCA), and the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), the mission not only strengthened Hawaiʻi's coffee connections but also featured a key buyer from Hainan, expanding Hawaiʻi coffee's reach on the global stage.



Mr. Jean Orlowski, Founder of Hala Tree, introduces his farm to potential buyers, showcasing the farm's practices and offerings.

The mission provided international buyers with a rare opportunity to tour Hawaiʻi's most distinguished coffee farms and roasters. Participants learned about Hawaiʻi's coffee cultivation methods, sustainable practices, and the certification requirements for exporting coffee to China. The mission also facilitated face-to-face meetings between Hawaiʻi's coffee producers and international buyers, including the Hainan buyer, exploring new market opportunities. This event served as a platform for strengthening Hawaiʻi's ties with China, particularly Hainan, and demonstrated the strong market potential for Hawaiʻi coffee in emerging international markets.

In September 2025, the Hainan Sister State Liaison Dialogue took place from September 26 to 29, strengthening the ongoing partnership between Hainan and Hawaiʻi. This event, which followed the Hawaiʻi legislative delegation's visit and coffee tasting event in July, provided a valuable opportunity for continued dialogue and collaboration between the two regions.

During the exchange, Hawaiʻi representatives engaged with government officials and industry leaders to gain insights into the latest policies and development plans for the Hainan Free Trade Port, with a particular focus on trade facilitation. In addition to government meetings, delegates visited several key Hainan-based enterprises in the

coffee industry, including Hainan Lexiang Times Agricultural Technology Development Co., Ltd. and Junwang International Supply Chain Services (Hainan). These visits offered firsthand exposure to the development of Hainan's coffee industry, from cultivation to processing, and contributed to a deeper understanding of the opportunities for future cooperation in this sector.

From July 23 to 26, 2025, a 17-member delegation from Hawaiʻi, led by key legislators Senator Lynn DeCoite, Senator Henry Aquino, Representative Sean Quinlan, Representative Daniel Holt, Representative Justin Woodson, and Representative Scot Matayoshi, visited Hainan Province to deepen the sister-state relationship and explore new collaboration opportunities. The delegation also included Ralph Gaston, Secretary of the Hawaiʻi Coffee Association, and Kevin Olival, Associate Dean and Associate Director for Research at the University of Hawaiʻi Mānoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

During the visit, the delegation met with Hainan University and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences to discuss joint research initiatives, exchange programs, and collaboration in agriculture and education. A key highlight was a Coffee Tasting and Networking Event in Hainan, which introduced Hawaiʻi's coffee industry to key stakeholders in the region.



A group photo of the delegation in the Hainan Train Station waiting area.

The group also experienced Hainan's high-speed rail system, traveling from Haikou to Sanya, which highlighted the province's impressive infrastructure development. In Sanya, they met with local officials and the Sanya Tourism Board at the Atlantis Hotel to discuss tourism promotion and potential joint ventures.

The visit concluded with a meeting with Hainan Governor Liu Xiaoming, who had visited Hawaiʻi in 2023. Discussions focused on Hainan's status as China's first free trade port, exploring how Hawaiʻi could leverage this to boost trade, investment, and collaboration, especially in agriculture and tourism. The delegation also discussed restoring direct flights between Hawaiʻi and China and expanding student exchange programs. Maryknoll High School in Hawaiʻi is planning to participate in a student exchange program in 2026, which was also discussed during the meeting.

In June 2025, Hainan Vice Governor H.E. Ms. Xie Jing and her delegation of 8 visited Hawaiʻi for a one-day transit. They met with Representative Daniel Holt, Representative Jackson Sayama, and DBEDT Deputy Director Dane Wicker to discuss future cooperation in trade, education, and tourism, further solidifying the growing relationship between Hawaiʻi and Hainan.

Additionally, discussions focused on the potential for a direct flight between Beijing and Honolulu, operated by Hainan Airlines. As the fourth-largest airline group in China, Hainan Airlines owns 12 provincial airlines. Governor Liu, a strong advocate for restoring direct flights between Hawaiʻi and China, emphasized the importance of this connection to foster closer cultural and economic ties between the two regions.

Taiwan (1993)

In October 2025, the inaugural Reverse Coffee Mission brought 17 industry professionals, including four prominent coffee buyers from Taiwan, to Hawaiʻi for an

exclusive week-long experience designed to highlight Hawaiʻi's renowned coffee industry. Organized by the Synergistic Hawaiʻi Agriculture Council (SHAC), the Hawaiʻi Coffee Association (HCA), and the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), this mission not only deepened Hawaiʻi's coffee connections but also featured Taiwanese coffee buyers, expanding Hawaiʻi's coffee presence in the Taiwanese market.



A group photo at the coffee tasting event, showcasing the diverse coffees from the farms visited during the mission.

The mission gave international buyers the rare opportunity to tour Hawaiʻi's distinguished coffee farms and roasters. Participants learned about Hawaiʻi's coffee cultivation methods, sustainable practices, and the certification requirements for exporting coffee to Taiwan. This mission also facilitated valuable face-to-face meetings between Hawaiʻi's local coffee producers and the Taiwanese buyers, exploring new market opportunities for Hawaiʻi coffee in Taiwan. The Reverse Coffee Mission served as an important platform for strengthening Hawaiʻi's ties with Taiwan, particularly in the coffee sector, and showcased the strong market potential for Hawaiʻi coffee in new and expanding international markets.

From September 20 to 26, 2025, DBEDT, in partnership with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Honolulu, led a 14-member delegation to Taipei and Taoyuan. The delegation included Speaker of the House Representative Nadine Nakamura and Representatives Mark Hashem, Representatives Daniel Holt, Representatives Greggor

Ilagan, Representatives Jackson Sayama, Representatives Cory Chun, Representatives Jenna Takenouchi, Representatives Trish La Chica, and Representatives Tyson Miyake. The group engaged in diplomatic meetings, industry visits, and cultural exchanges aimed at strengthening ties between Hawaiʻi and Taiwan.

The mission began with meetings with Taiwanese government officials, including discussions with Mr. Lijaucu Zingrur, Minister of the Council of Indigenous Peoples, which focused on indigenous culture, heritage preservation, and community development. Delegates also met with Dr. Chen Ming-chi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to explore ways to further strengthen economic and educational ties between the regions.



Delegation group photo at the U.S. Business Day event in Taiwan, highlighting Hawai'i's strong presence and ongoing collaboration with Taiwan.

A highlight of the mission was participation in the U.S. Business Day event on September 23. The delegation attended the opening ceremony, and DBEDT Deputy Director Dane Wicker made a presentation to promote Hawaiʻi's economic potential, emphasizing opportunities for business development and trade with Taiwan. Wicker's presentation highlighted Hawaiʻi's strengths in tourism, agriculture, sustainable technology, and Hawaiʻi-made products.

The delegation also visited the State of Hawaiʻi Office in Taipei, where they received an update on the office's initiatives and explored opportunities for further business development, cultural exchange, and collaboration in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and Hawaiʻi-made products. Key discussions included the resumption of direct flights between Hawaiʻi and Taiwan, as well as potential joint ventures in sustainable agriculture, technology, and urban development.

The group also toured Taiwan's cutting-edge agricultural facilities, including the Experimental Farm at National Taiwan University and Yes iFarm, where they explored advancements in smart farming and vertical agriculture. These visits presented opportunities for collaboration in crop diversification, product innovations, and sustainable agricultural practices, particularly with Hawaiʻi's Mamaki tea.

The mission concluded with enriching visits to Taiwan's National Palace Museum and Yehliu Geopark, which provided the delegation with deeper insights into Taiwan's cultural heritage and environmental tourism initiatives.

The delegation met with several Taiwan government officials and the office of SHOT. The mission provided a platform for Hawaiʻi's leaders to promote local industries and highlight Hawaiʻi's strengths, such as its unique agricultural products, technological innovations, and its strong commitment to sustainability.

INDONESIA

Bali, Indonesia (2014)

In March 2025, Ms. Afina Burhanuddin, Minister Counsellor and Consul for Information and Socio-Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Los Angeles, met with DBEDT staff to discuss opportunities to strengthen Hawaiʻi's sister-state relationship with the Bali Provincial Government, established in 2014. The

discussion included initiatives such as tourism promotion, cultural and arts exchanges, trade missions, agricultural collaboration, and personnel exchanges—including tourism and airport staff—to enhance operational knowledge sharing and deepen people-to-people connections between the two regions.

Following the visit by Consulate officials in Los Angeles, DBEDT held a virtual meeting with the Bali Provincial Government staff. While numerous ideas were proposed, additional discussions are required before future initiatives can be implemented.

JAPAN

During 2025, the Hawaii-Japan sister-state activities were abundant and meaningful. Japan continues to be an important partner in many Hawaii-Japan activities, and the following sister-state narrative provides highlights of what was accomplished in 2025.

Hawaiʻi-Japan Sister Summit

The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH), in collaboration with DBEDT, will be convening the second Hawaiʻi-Japan Sister Summit in Honolulu from May 20-22, 2026. Program plans are underway to increase participation from sister prefectures and sister cities in Japan.

During the 2026 Summit, an added feature will be the Hawaii-Japan Economic Policy Forum. The Economic Policy Forum will bring together Japanese and Hawai`i governmental leaders and business executives to explore strategies for enhancing trade and economic partnerships between Hawaii and Japan. As long-standing partners with deep historical, cultural, and economic ties, both regions are uniquely positioned to expand mutual economic growth through strategic initiatives and actions. To ensure meaningful discussion, the Forum will be limited to governors, mayors, elected officials and senior government leaders from Hawai`i and Japan.

In 2023, the inaugural Hawaiʻi-Japan Sister Summit was held from July 27-28, 2023, at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort.

With the theme, "The Ties That Bind", the Governor of the State of Hawaiʻi, the Mayors of the City & Counties of Honolulu, Kauaʻi, Maui and Hawaiʻi, and the Governors, Mayors and designated representatives of six sister prefectures and sixteen cities and towns in Japan participated in the Summit. The Sister Summit was an opportunity to explore common issues to further deepen and strengthen sister and friendship relationships by setting goals to increase exchanges between our governments and municipalities and share information of the respective exchange programs. In total, over 400 participants attended the two-day event.

Each sister prefecture from Japan was represented at the Summit either by a Governor or Vice Governor. It was the first time that all of the sister officials participated in a joint meeting that solidified the relationships between the State of Hawaiʻi and the six prefectures.

The State of Hawaiʻi received tremendous support from the Japan sister prefectures as a result of the tragic wildfires on Maui and the devastation of Lahaina Town. The overwhelming support has further strengthened the close ties Hawaiʻi shares with Japan.

Fukuoka Prefecture (1981)

The Hawaiʻi Fukuoka Kenjinkai (HFKK) and the Hawaii-Fukuoka Liaison Office are the points-of-contact for many activities that support the Hawaiʻi-Fukuoka Sister-State Relationship together with the Fukuoka Prefectural Government. There were numerous visits and activities that took place in 2025 as follows:

January 2025 – Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly Friendship Delegation Visit to Hawai'i

At the official invitation of the Hawai'i State Senate President and House Speaker, a seven-member friendship delegation from the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly visited Hawai'i to attend the opening ceremony of the Hawai'i State Legislature.

During the visit, the delegation held meetings and exchanges with Governor Josh Green, Senate President Ronald Kouchi and House Speaker Nadine Nakaumra. In addition, meetings and visits with the Fukuoka Kenjinkai and Consul General of Japan in Honolulu occurred.

The delegation also held discussions with the University of Hawai'i (JABSOM) regarding One Health collaboration. These exchanges contributed to strengthening long-standing sister-state relations and exploring new areas of cooperation.

June 2025 – Culinary and Food Culture Exchange Program

A group of six post-secondary students (junior college and university students), selected by Fukuoka Prefecture, traveled to Hawai'i for a culinary and food culture exchange with Kapi'olani Community College (KCC).

During their stay, the students:

- Participated in team-based collaborative cooking sessions with KCC students;
- Developed creative menus showcasing ingredients from both Hawai'i and Fukuoka;
- Visited sustainable farms and learned about Hawai'i's food culture and agricultural practices.

Following this program, KCC students traveled to Fukuoka for a reciprocal visit, where they studied Fukuoka's traditional food culture.

The menus prototyped during the exchange were completed and presented before a

panel of renowned chefs. One dish was selected and featured as a limited-time in-flight meal on Hawaiian Airlines—an exceptional and memorable outcome.

The delegation also extended their sincere appreciation to distinguished leaders in Hawai'i's culinary community, including Chef Roy Yamaguchi and Chef Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant. Their guidance, encouragement, and support greatly enriched the student exchange and deepened the participants' understanding of Hawai'i's diverse food culture. Their contributions significantly elevated the success and impact of this program.

In July 2025, four outstanding Junior Ambassadors (JAs) from Hawaiʻi had the unique honor of participating in the 37th Asian-Pacific Children's Convention (APCC) held in Fukuoka, Japan. The students embarked on a ten-day journey of cultural exchange, international friendship, and personal growth as representatives of Hawaiʻi and the United States.

The APCC, founded in 1989, is an annual international program that brings together children from countries and regions across the Asia-Pacific. Its mission is to promote mutual understanding, peace, and friendship by enabling young people to connect through shared experiences. With participants from over 60 different regions, the APCC provides an invaluable opportunity for children to learn about global cultures firsthand while sharing their own. JASH facilitated this incredible opportunity and is grateful to the families, sponsors, and volunteers who helped make the APCC program a success each year.

August 2025 – Sports Exchange (Girls' Basketball)

A team of 12 female basketball players selected from Fukuoka Prefecture visited Hawai'i for a comprehensive sports and cultural exchange program.

The group conducted the following activities:

Oʻahu Island:

- School visits and cultural exchanges at Kalani High School and McKinley High School

- Reception hosted by the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE), attended by the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, principals, teachers, and students from the three public high schools engaged in long-term exchange with Fukuoka;

- Exchanges with Sacred Hearts Academy and Kamehameha Schools;

- Friendly matches against Kamehameha Schools and 'Iolani School were held with Fukuoka winning both games.

Hawai'i Island:

For the first time, the Fukuoka team extended the exchange to Hawai'i Island to visit Konawaena High School, one of the state's top-performing public school basketball programs.

Activities included:

- Held joint visit with Konawaena students to Island Samurai Coffee Farm;

- Received a warm welcome and school-led cultural exchange hosted by Konawaena High School;

- Held a friendly match attended by community leaders, the Kona Fukuoka Kenjinkai, and supporters—Fukuoka won the match;

- Attended a Luau Dinner reception generously prepared by Konawaena High School.

This program was made possible through the strong support of Hawai'i DOE and significantly deepened mutual friendship, understanding, and long-term exchange opportunities.



October 2025 – Maritime and Fisheries Exchange (Kaiyū-Maru & Campbell High School)

The long-standing 10+ year exchange between Fukuoka Prefectural Fisheries High School and James Campbell High School continued during the Kaiyū-Maru training vessel's approximately 55-day voyage.



The vessel made a port call in Hawai'i and the following activities were coordinated:

- In the morning, approximately 50 students from the Kaiyū-Maru visited Campbell High School;

- In the afternoon, Campbell High School students visited the Kaiyū-Maru, where they toured the vessel and engaged in cultural exchange activities.

This year, Hawai'i's Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Deputy Consul from the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu, and DOE educators, welcomed the Kaiyū-Maru students. This maritime exchange continues to be one of the most meaningful and enduring youth programs between Hawai'i and Fukuoka.

November 2025 - The Worldwide Fukuoka Kenjinkai Convention was held in Fukuoka. Representatives from the Hawai'i Fukuoka Kenjinkai attended the event. It was also officially announced that the next Worldwide Fukuoka Kenjinkai Convention will be held in Hawai'i in 2028.

December 2025 – One Health Initiative Student Exchange

("From Fukuoka to the World" Human Resource Development Program)

As part of Fukuoka Prefecture's youth development initiative, a dedicated *One Health* Exchange Day was incorporated into the program's Hawai'i course.

This became the first official *One Health* student exchange in the State of Hawai'i, bringing together both public and private high schools.
Program highlights included:

- 20 students (selected from over 400 applicants) from Fukuoka visited Kaiser High School;

- Students from Island Pacific Academy (IPA) joined, resulting in a three-way exchange among Kaiser, IPA, and Fukuoka;

- Students presented *One Health* initiatives and engaged in collaborative discussions to deepen the mutual understanding and global awareness of the impact of *One Health*.

This unique program introduced a new model for international educational cooperation between Hawai'i and Fukuoka.

Throughout 2025, a wide range of exchange programs—including government, culinary arts, sports, maritime education, and *One Health* were successfully carried out between Hawai'i and Fukuoka Prefecture.

These initiatives strengthened the Hawai'i–Fukuoka sister-state partnership and created meaningful opportunities for youth, educators, and community leaders in both regions. The Fukuoka Prefecture Liaison Office in Hawai'i remains committed to supporting future exchanges and advancing bilateral cooperation.

Okinawa Prefecture (1985)

The Hawaiʻi United Okinawa Association (HUOA) actively engaged in numerous initiatives to promote, preserve, and perpetuate the Okinawan culture.

The 43rd Okinawan Festival was made even more special as HUOA commemorated the 125th Anniversary of Okinawan immigration to Hawaiʻi. It was a heartfelt tribute to the Issei (first generation), whose dedication, love of family, and willingness to sacrifice created the foundation for the vibrant Okinawan community in Hawaii today. Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki and 40 of the 41 Okinawan municipalities traveled to Hawaii to attend the festival.

The second day of the festival began with two significant Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signings. The first was between Meio University and HUOA and the second between the Okinawan Prefectural Library (OPL) and the Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii (OGSH). These ceremonies, while formal in nature, carry meaningful impact and strengthen bonds for future collaboration.

At the conclusion of the 43rd Okinawan Festival, the 6th Okinawan FEASTival continued the celebration of all things Okinawan by focusing on Okinawan cuisine and Okinawan-owned restaurants. This year, a total of 16 local businesses (a mixture of Okinawan and Okinawan-at-Heart) offered Okinawan-inspired specials that ranged from Ampalaya Champuru to Fried Andagi to Okinawan Bento.

2025 marked the 40th Anniversary of the Hawaii-Okinawa Sister-State Relationship and the 125Th Anniversary of Okinawa immigration to Hawaii/U.S. The following is a summary of activities between Hawaiʻi and Okinawa that occurred in 2025:

2025 HAWAIʻI'S SISTER STATES REPORT

In March 2025, HUOA planned and executed the 35th Annual Student Exchange in Hawaii and welcomed Okinawa high school students to the state.

From October 9-13, 2025, DBEDT led a delegation to Okinawa to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Hawaii-Okinawa sister-state relationship. Governor Josh Green and ten members of the Hawaii State Legislature participated in numerous governmental and commemorative activities. In addition, the HUOA led a "legacy" tour that included approximately 60 participants with Okinawa and Hawaii ties on a historical journey.





HUOA may be the only Okinawan *kenjinkai* that arranges annual visits by HUOA Presidents and Presidents-Elect with Okinawan government officials, University of the Ryukyus, and news/media corporations including the Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times. Through these face-to-face visits, friendships are formed and the collaboration and education between Hawaiʻi Uchinanchu members and Okinawa friends and relatives can be perpetuated.

Hiroshima Prefecture (1997)

Since the establishment of the Hawaiʻi-Hiroshima Sister-State Relationship, the Hiroshima Hawaiʻi Sister State Committee (HHSSC) has worked together with the Hiroshima Prefectural Government on mutually beneficial programs and causes in the spirit of building a partnership of friendship, cooperation, and aloha between the people of both regions. It has been the committee's goal to concentrate their collective efforts on programs focused on education; business and economic development; culture and the arts; athletics; and peace initiatives.

From the onset, it has been Committee's goal to concentrate their collective efforts on building programs centering on the themes of:

A. Education
B. Business and Economic Development
C. Culture and Arts
D. Athletics
E. Peace initiatives

For the year 2025, the HHSSC initiated and participated in the following programs/events with the help of the Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjinkai (HHKK):

Education:

With the support of the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, two students were selected to participate in two International Youth Student Exchange Programs held in Hiroshima during the summer of 2025. Both exchange programs offered youth the opportunity to discover and learn more about ancestral roots in Hiroshima.

On August 17, 2025, the HHKK arranged and participated in a workshop to promote English and friendship dinner with the Sera Town Board of Education. This marked the 12th time for this event. Through the leadership of the Sera Town Board of Education and support of the HHKK, a "sister" middle school relationship was established in August 2015 with the Niu Valley Middle School.

The Committee continued its efforts to establish sister high schools between schooled in Hawaii and Hiroshima. One such relationship is between Maui High School and a high school in Fukuyama, Hiroshima.

Business and Economic Development:

There were several initiatives involving companies based in Hiroshima during the past year, including the acquisition of Yohei Sushi in Kalihi, Oahu, and the opening of a new Yohei Sushi restaurant in Kahala, Oahu.

Culture and Arts/Peace Initiatives:

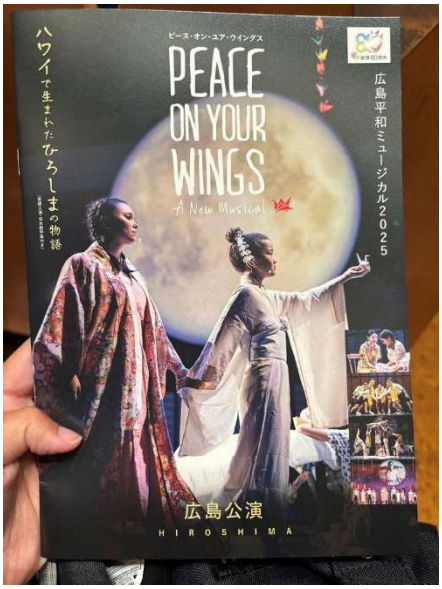
On February 12, 2025, the HHKK developed and staffed booths to promote Hiroshima at the Japanese Consulate of Hawaii at an event honoring the Emperor of Japan's Birthday.

Our HHKK was fortunate to receive promotional brochures, etc. from the Hiroshima Prefectural and Hiroshima City Governments to promote the culture and uniqueness of Hiroshima.

The HHSSC was invited and participated in numerous events marking the 80th anniversary of the tragic bombing of Hiroshima. Leaders of Pearl Harbor and Pacific Historic Parks and Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi also traveled to Hiroshima to participate in this event. Working with Hiroshima City Mayor Kazumi Matsui's staff, the late Larry Miwa's Diary, "Gambare Hiroshima – Don't Give Up!" was presented to over 250 VIP guests representing governments from around the world.

In 2025, the Committee assisted Pearl Harbor and Pacific Historic Parks officials in sending a State of Hawaii Youth delegation to Hiroshima for the August 6th service. The Hawaii delegation was comprised of five high school students (including two students from the devastated Lahaina, Maui area).

At the invitation from Mayor Matsui of Hiroshima City, local Hawaii performers of the *Peace on Your Wings* musical took part in Japan's Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony in August 2025, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.



The show is a production of local performing arts organization ʻOhana Arts, that tells the story of Sadako Sasaki, who folded 1,000 paper cranes in hopes of getting better after radiation from the Hiroshima blast gave her leukemia. She died at age 12 in 1955. Later, Honolulu became the first city to establish a sister-city relationship with Hiroshima, in 1959, the year after Sadako's monument was unveiled at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

The Hiroshima Commemoration and Peace Service (HCPS) was held in Honolulu to honor the victims and those (or hibakusha) whose lives were affected by the unprecedented bombing of Hiroshima 80 years ago. Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke presented a message on behalf of the State of Hawaii for this year's program.

The keynote speaker, Melinda Clarke, who lives on Maui, traveled to Honolulu to participate in the Service. Ms. Clarke authored her book, "Waymakers for Peace – Hiroshima and Nagasaki Survivors Speak", told of her experiences in recanting the stories of the survivors of both bombings in her presentation.

From August 1–9, 2025, Hiroshima Peace Scholars Chloe Tonda (Punahou School) and Mia Nishiguchi (Kalani High School), and Chaperone Mr. Todd Oshima, a music teacher from Moanalua High School, took part in a deeply educational and culturally immersive exchange program in Hiroshima. JASH accompanied the group throughout the trip. During the nine-day program, students lived with host families, built friendships with students from various schools in Japan, and participated in a Peace Forum hosted by Hiroshima Jogakuin High School. They also had the rare opportunity to speak with *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivors), attend the August 6 Peace Memorial Ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Park, meet with Hiroshima government officials, and gained firsthand insight into ongoing efforts to promote a global culture of peace.



Ehime Prefecture (2003)

Members of the Ehime Kenjinkai in Honolulu continued to be active and involved in many Ehime activities in Hawaii including the caring of the Ehime Maru Memorial at the Kakaako Waterfront Park; organizing the annual Ehime Maru Ceremony and other events. The members also participated in a number Uwajima-Honolulu sister City anniversary events.

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In November 2025, the Hawaii-Ehime Youth Baseball Exchange Program was held with a 54-person delegation from Ehime that included baseball players, chaperones and government officials traveling to Hawaii to foster goodwill between Hawaii and Ehime through this sporting event that has been held for 17 years in Hawaii and Ehime.



Led by Prefectural Assemblymen Junnosuke Kaino and Koichi Fukura, the group was officially welcomed at the Hawaii State Capitol by Vice-Speaker of the House Linda Ichiyama, Representative Andrew Garret, and Representative Jackson Sayama. Though unable to attend due to urgent government business, Governor Josh Green sent a note of welcome, affirming his support for the Ehime-Hawaii Sister State Relationship.

In addition to the goodwill games, a Remembrance Ceremony was held at the Ehime Maru Memorial at Kakaako Waterfront Park. Bishop Kosen Ishikawa of Jodo Mission of Hawaii presided over the event, which was also attended by JASH President Reyna Kaneko and members of the Ehime Kenjinkai.

Punahou School was included in the players' visit in 2025.

The Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu played a significant role in the events. Consul General Hideaki Chotoku provided remarks at the baseball games' opening ceremony, emphasizing the importance of international friendship exchanges and

person-to-person diplomacy. Deputy Consul-General Haruta Hiroki delivered the keynote speech at the Welcome Reception.

The exchange concluded successfully, thanks in large part to the generosity of the Hawaii families who opened their hearts and homes to the Ehime baseball participants.

JASH welcomed ten students from various high schools in Ehime who traveled to Hawaii from September 26-October 1, 2025, to participate in a cultural exchange hosted by the Ehime Prefectural International Center (EPIC), which promotes cultural understanding and international cooperation through various programs and exchanges. Since 2013, EPIC has organized this exchange program, annually sending students from Ehime to Hawaii.

Hokkaido Prefecture (2017)

JASH selected ten students to participate in the Hokkaido Snow Camp. As part of its activities, the group joined twenty other high school students from across Japan at the Hotel Lifort Sapporo for the Environmental Summit. The event featured engaging lectures from experts, including Dr. Honda, who delivered a detailed presentation on the Ocean and its environmental challenges. The talks, paired with workshops on environmental issues, provided a deeper understanding of the urgent need for change. The students were then tasked with creating proposals to promote positive environmental action for the Ocean. After the summit, they were interviewed as they exited the conference hall, sharing their reflections on the day's discussions and insights.



The Hokkaido Club Hawaii continued to be active in numerous Hawaii-Hokkaido activities in 2025. Club members worked at the Honolulu Festival and assisted staff of the Hokkaido Tourism Bureau to promote Hokkaido.

During the summer of 2025, the Hokkaido Club Hawaii members welcomed two bureau chiefs representing Sapporo City Hall at a traditional BBQ event at Ala Moana Beach Park. This event was held to introduce and welcome possible new members to the Hokkaido Club Hawaii.

Marukai Hawaii held a Hokkaido Fair in July 2025. It was a great opportunity for Hakodate and Eastern Hokkaido to showcase products from Hokkaido.

On Tuesday, October 21, 2025, JASH hosted its signature Taste of JASH food series, sponsored by Kintetsu Hawaii International, at Tonkatsu Tamafuji in Honolulu. Guests were treated to an exquisite tasting experience featuring Hokkaido's renowned tonkatsu. Due to overwhelming demand, the exclusive event featured two seatings to accommodate attendees.

Guests enjoyed a variety of dishes, including Tonkatsu, Pork Tenderloin Tonkatsu, and combination plates with Shrimp or Oysters. It was a delightful evening filled with cultural exchange, delicious food, and opportunities to connect and make new friends.

Later in 2025, the Hokkaido Club Hawaii hosted a karaoke tournament and golf tournament. The Club's largest event was the Genghis Khan event held during the latter part of 2025.

Yamaguchi Prefecture (2022)

Members of the Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjin Kai lead and participated in numerous events in 2025.

January 2025 - Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's members prepared and sold 400 plates of kawara soba at the Japanese Cultural Center's New Year's ʻOhana Festival. Kawara soba is a unique noodle dish distinctly from the prefecture of Yamaguchi. Members were proud to share the culture of Yamaguchi Prefecture in Hawai'i. President Gail Wakatake and 1st Vice President Mark Saruwatari greeted and welcomed members of the Yamaguchi Board of Education; the students, faculty, and staff from Suo-Oshima High School, Iwakuni High School, and Takamori High School; and Yamaguchi University, who were in Hawai'i as part of the Yamaguchi Prefectural Global Education Program. The Kenjinkai welcomed two groups of students who were preparing to visit Kauai High School and Kalani High School and also welcomed several members of the Yamaguchi Board of Education, high school and university faculty.

February 2025 - A delegation from Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai paid a courtesy visit on February 20 to the Kaiyu Maru Japanese training fishing vessel and welcomed the students and instructors from Ohtsu Ryokuyo High School in Nagato, Yamaguchi. The

Kaiyu Maru had voyaged from Yamaguchi, Japan and was moored at Honolulu Harbor. It was the second visit by the Kaiyu Maru since the pandemic. On February 22, 2025, Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai hosted a picnic at Magic Island for the 50 students and instructors from Ohtsu Ryokuyo High School, along with Principal Hayama and Captain Tanabe and the crew of the Kaiyu Maru. The Kaiyu Maru also graciously transported brochures and giveaways from the Yamaguchi Prefectural government to pass on to Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai, which were shared at the Honolulu Festival the following month.

March 2025 - Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai participated in the Honolulu Festival and shared hundreds of Yamaguchi Prefecture travel brochures to passersby of the Honolulu Festival. Visitors were able to sample mikan cider and take home various souvenirs from Yamaguchi Prefecture, including fugu fans and other prefectural gifts. We had the famous Hagiyaki pottery on display as well as a map of Yamaguchi to encourage people to visit Yamaguchi. About thirty new members were recruited to join Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai.

Several members of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai participated in an international virtual Yamaguchi Youth Exchange hosted by the Yamaguchi Prefectural Government. Youth from Yamaguchi Kenjikai around the world including Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Honolulu had the unique opportunity to talk with each other with the assistance of English and Japanese interpreters. It was a meaningful event that connected those with Yamaguchi roots across the globe.

September 2025 - A delegation from Mayor Blangiardi's office traveled to Yamaguchi City for the official Friendship City signing ceremony between Yamaguchi City and Honolulu. Mayor Blangiardi was represented by Chief of Staff Andy Sugg, and other members of the Honolulu City Council delegation included Honolulu City Council Chair Tommy Waters, City Councilmember Scott Nishimoto, City Councilmember Radiant Cordeiro, and others. Twenty-nine members of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai also

traveled to Yamaguchi City and participated in the official signing ceremony and other festivities and celebrations. Governor Muraoka, Vice Governor Hiraya, and Assembly Chairperson Yanai were also present at the signing ceremony and celebratory dinners. The signing ceremony was included in the newspapers and broadcast on television. Several members of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai were interviewed on television.



Again, the Yamaguchi City government and Yamaguchi Prefectural government hosted and shared their wonderful and generous, thoughtful Yamaguchi spirit with those of us from Hawai'i.

Members of the Yamaguchi Japan-America Society hosted the Honolulu City Council and members of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinaki to a full day of events including being outfitted in a yukata and other cultural activities. The day ended with a lively, wonderful reception hosted by the Yamaguchi Japan-America Society for members of the Honolulu City Council and Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai in the historic Saikoutei. Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai members continued their journey across Yamaguchi and visited Suo-Oshima.

In 2026, the Kenjinkai looks forward to seeing delegations from the Yamaguchi Prefectural Office, Yamaguchi City, Suo-Oshima, and others who will be attending the 2026 Sister Summit in May.

November 2025 - A member of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai represented HYK and participated in the "Outbound Kenjinkai and Local Residents Exchange Event in Yamaguchi Prefecture." This event invites young members of Kenjinkai residing overseas to visit Yamaguchi and engage in a cultural exchange with local universities.

December 2025 - Members of Honolulu Yamaguchi Kenjinkai joined an online interview session sponsored by the Yamaguchi Japan-America Society as they interview university students from Florida who visited Yamaguchi in May.

The HYK delegation paid courtesy visits to Governor Tsugumasa Muraoka and Assembly Chairperson Shungaku Yanai in their prefectural offices. The two courtesy visits were important and reaffirmed the friendship and commitment between the regions.

The HYK delegation enjoyed the generous and gracious hospitality of Yamaguchi City and Yamaguchi Prefecture at a reception where members enjoyed the evening with Yamaguchi Vice Governor Takayuki Hiraya, Assembly Chairperson Yanai, Mayor Ito, and many other government officials.

KOREA

Jeju Province (1986)

Superintendent Keith Hayashi attended the 2025 Jeju International Youth Forum for the first time and met with the current Jeju Education Governor/Superintendent Gwang Soo Kim to discuss a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since the previous one

expired during the pandemic, and there are current areas of great potential for future collaboration.

MOROCCO

Greater Region of Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer (2011)

No activities reported in 2025.

PHILIPPINES

The Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaiʻi (FCCH) held their 32nd Trade Mission to the Philippines from February 28 – March 11, 2025, with the goal of strengthening business connections between Hawai'i and the Philippines. Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Director Jade Butay and FCCH President Melody Calisay, Ph.D. led 36 delegates to various provinces including Ilocos Norte, Laguna, Iloilo, Bataan and the Metro Manila area.

In conjunction with the trade mission, Ilocos Norte Province hosted the 2nd Philippines-Hawaiʻi Sister Province Symposium, a follow-on event to the 1st Hawaiʻi -Philippines Sister Province Symposium hosted by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaiʻi in partnership with DBEDT held in Honolulu on March 13, 2024, at the Hawaiʻi Convention Center.



Trade Mission Delegates at Rizal Park in Manila

Ilocos Sur Province (1985)

The following government representatives from Ilocos Sur province attended the Philippines-Hawaiʻi Sister Province Symposium and subsequently met with Trade Mission delegates:

1) Michelle A. Adolfo – Tourism Office;
2) Mary Madelaine A. Salvado – Supervising Labor and Employment Officer;
3) Lovely Anne Charmaine F. Taaca – Local Economic Development and Investment Promotions Office;

Cebu Province, Philippines (1996)

No activities reported for 2024-2025.

Pangasinan Province (2002)

The following government representatives from Pangasinan province attended the Philippines-Hawaiʻi Sister Province Symposium and subsequently met with Trade Mission delegates:

1) Jhoeanica M. Sibayan – Marketing Specialist, Provincial Economic Development and Investment Promotions Office (PEDIPO)
2) Raymundo B. Bautista Jr. – Attorney, PEDIPO
3) Bien Allyn P. Tandoc – Administrative Officer
4) Maria Luisa Amor-Elduayan – Head, Provincial Tourism, Culture, and Arts Office
5) Maica Joyce G. Eslao – Administrative Aide

Ilocos Norte Province (2005)

On their 32nd Trade Mission to the Philippines, the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaiʻi visited Laoag City, Ilocos Norte province. As mentioned earlier in this report, Ilocos Norte hosted the 2nd Philippines-Hawaiʻi Sister Province Symposium. Symposium topics discussed included Emerging Trade Opportunities & Workplace Development and Culture & Connectivity. Director Jade Butay from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations attended the Trade Mission and Symposium on behalf of the State.

Additionally, the Trade Mission delegates toured Malacañang of the North, the former official residence of former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, and now a museum open to the public. Delegates subsequently conducted courtesy calls with Ilocos Norte Governor Matthew Manotoc, Vice-Governor Cecilia Araneta Marcos, and Laoag City Mayor Michael Marcos Keon and Vice Mayor Michael Farinas.



Delegates at the Philippines-Hawaiʻi Sister State Symposium

Isabela Province (2006)

No activities reported for 2025.

PORTUGAL

Azores Islands (1982)

No activities reported for 2025.

Madeira (202X approved, but not signed yet)

The Hawaiʻi Sister-State Committee was tasked by the Hawaiʻi legislature to consider a sister-state relationship with Madeira, Portugal. The Hawaiʻi Sister-State Committee met on November 16, 2021, to consider the application for Madeira, Portugal and Hawaiʻi to form a sister-state relationship. The application was very strong with many people and organizations in Hawaiʻi and Madeira offering supporting testimony in written form and by video-conference. The Sister-State Committee made a unanimous recommendation to accept the application. DBEDT staff informed the Hawaiʻi legislature of the Committee's decision. Unfortunately, the COVID19 pandemic interrupted plans for an official signing ceremony. Discussions have begun with the Consulate General of Portugal in San Francisco to schedule a signing ceremony.