
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the existing scope
2 of chapter 229, Hawaii Revised Statutes, needs to be broadened
3 because at present, it focuses largely on sister-state or
4 province partnerships. The legislature further finds that
5 modern government-to-government work requires the ability to
6 enter into nonbinding memoranda of understanding with national
7 governments or ministries, regional bodies, and other Asia-
8 Pacific partners. Such an expansion will enable the State to
9 advance in key areas including agriculture, biosecurity, climate
10 resilience, indigenous knowledge, education, renewable energy,
11 and economic development.

12 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to:

13 (1) Authorize the governor and legislature to enter into
14 nonbinding international cooperative agreements with
15 foreign national governments, foreign subnational
16 jurisdictions, and regional intergovernmental
17 partners; and



1 (2) Authorize the Hawaii sister-state and international
2 partnerships commission to review proposals for
3 sister-state or province partnerships and
4 international cooperative agreements.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 229, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended by adding two new sections to be appropriately
7 designated and to read as follows:

8 **"S229-** **Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to
9 facilitate Hawaii's engagement in international, regional, and
10 sister-state or province partnerships to support the State's
11 cultural, educational, environmental, and economic goals. This
12 chapter authorizes the State to enter into sister-state or
13 province partnerships and international cooperative agreements
14 with foreign national governments, foreign subnational
15 jurisdictions, and regional intergovernmental partners.

16 **\$229- International cooperative agreements; authorized.**

17 (a) The governor, or the governor's designee, may enter into

18 nonbinding international cooperative agreements with national

19 governments; national ministries, departments, or agencies;

20 provincial or regional governments; or international



1 intergovernmental bodies relevant to the State's interests in
2 Asia and the Pacific.

3 (b) The legislature, through concurrent resolution or by
4 enacting session law to that effect, may enter into nonbinding
5 international cooperative agreements with national governments;
6 national ministries, departments, or agencies; provincial or
7 regional governments; or international intergovernmental bodies
8 relevant to the State's interests in Asia and the Pacific.

9 (c) Any international cooperative agreement entered into
10 pursuant to subsection (a) or (b):

11 (1) Shall be nonbinding;
12 (2) Shall not create legally enforceable obligations; and
13 (3) Shall not constitute any treaty, alliance, compact, or
14 other agreement that is prohibited by Article I,
15 Section 10, of the United States Constitution."

16 SECTION 3. Chapter 229, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by amending its title to read as follows:

18 **"INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS;**
19 **SISTER-STATE [AND] OR PROVINCE [RELATIONSHIPS]**
20 **PARTNERSHIPS; INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS"**



1 SECTION 4. Section 229-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

3 "(b) The commission shall support the governor,
4 legislature, and office of international affairs in building and
5 maintaining strategic long-term sister-state or province
6 partnerships and international cooperative agreements that
7 promote and enrich the people, cultures, environments, and
8 economies of the State and its international partners."

9 SECTION 5. Section 229-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended to read as follows:

11 **"§229-3 Initiating sister-state [relationships.] or**
12 **province partnerships; proposal review; international**
13 **cooperative agreements.** (a) The commission shall evaluate and
14 develop recommendations for the initiation of all sister-state
15 or province partnerships or international cooperative agreements
16 and forward its recommendation to the legislature. The
17 legislature, if it so chooses, shall implement the
18 recommendation to initiate a sister-state or province
19 partnership or international cooperative agreement by either
20 adopting a concurrent resolution or by enacting session law to
21 that effect.



1 (b) The commission may review proposals for sister-state
2 or province relationships or international cooperative
3 agreements, including agreements with national governments or
4 ministries, and shall make recommendations to the legislature
5 and governor."

6 SECTION 6. Section 229-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by amending its title to read as follows:

8 **"S229-4 Maintaining sister-state [relationships.] or**
9 **province partnerships.**"

10 SECTION 7. Section 229-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by amending its title to read as follows:

12 **"S229-5 Dissolving sister-state [relationships.] or**
13 **province partnerships.**"

14 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

17

INTRODUCED BY:


JAN 27 2026



Report Title:

International Relations; International Cooperative Agreements; Sister-State or Province Partnerships; Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission

Description:

Authorizes the Governor and Legislature to enter into nonbinding international cooperative agreements with foreign national governments, foreign subnational jurisdictions, and regional intergovernmental partners. Authorizes the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission to review proposals for sister-state or province partnerships and international cooperative agreements.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

