

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

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December 26, 2024

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

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

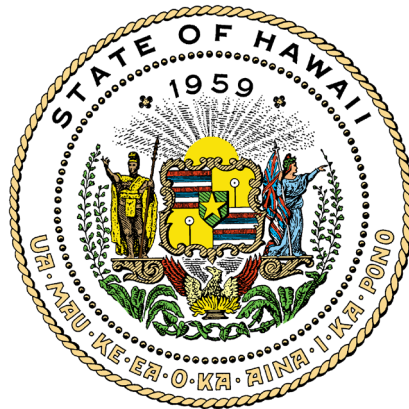
James Kunane Tokioka  
DBEDT Director

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 2024**

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



## Hawai'i Sister-State Committee

As of 2024, the Hawai'i Sister-State Committee had four active members filling four of the five seats for this committee.

<b>Jane Clement</b>	Representing: Hawai'i State Association of Counties
<b>Vacant</b>	Representing: Native Hawaiian Cultural Organization
<b>Kurt Osaki</b>	Representing: Speaker of the House of Representatives
<b>Jean E. Rolles</b>	Representing: East-West Center
<b>Eduardo Topenio Jr.</b>	Representing: President of the Senate
<b>Dennis T. Ling</b>	DBEDT – Committee Administration
<b>Mark Ritchie</b>	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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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).**

<b>SISTER-STATES (Chronological order)</b>		
<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PROVINCE/PREFECTURE</b>	<b>YEAR ESTABLISHED</b>
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
India	Goa (expired)	2018
Japan	Yamaguchi	2022
Portugal	Madeira (Approved, but not signed yet)	202X

<b>SISTER-STATES (Alphabetical order by country and area)</b>		
<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PROVINCE/PREFECTURE</b>	<b>YEAR ESTABLISHED</b>
Greater China	Guangdong	1985
	Hainan	1992
	Taiwan	1993
India	Goa (expired)	2018
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 November 2024, the State of Hawai'i Beijing Office (SHOB) held an online meeting with the Guangdong Foreign Affairs Office (GDFAO) to discuss strategies for enhancing collaboration and further strengthening exchanges and cooperation between the two regions. The discussions also focused on plans for the 40th Anniversary of the Hawai'i–Guangdong Sister-State Partnership in 2025.

With the support of GDFAO, the Consulate General of China in Los Angeles, the Agricultural Trade Office, Beijing (ATO Beijing), the State of Hawai'i Beijing Office (SHOB), and the Hawai'i Coffee Association (HCA), 12 coffee farms from Hawai'i received the certified Unroasted Coffee and Cocoa Beans Export Certificate from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) in August 2023.

In April 2023, a delegation of five individuals from the GDFAO, led by Deputy Director-General Mr. Luo Jun, visited State of Hawai'i and met with DBEDT Deputy Director Dane Wicker to exchange views for potential collaboration between Hawai'i and Guangdong, including but not limited to Hawai'i coffee, trade missions, participation in travel and tourism expos, and continuously supporting student exchange programs.

### **Hainan Province (1992)**

In July 2024, at the invitation from Hainan Province, Hawai'i participated in the 2024 Hainan Liaison Meeting for Sister-States/Sister-Cities, held from July 15 to 18. The meeting aimed to enhance mutual understanding and friendship through face-to-face communication, share insights on the social and economic development efforts in



Hainan, and explore opportunities for future cooperation. Hawai'i is the only U.S. state that maintains a friendly relationship with Hainan Province. During the meeting, Hawai'i delivered a presentation that introduced the state's geographical location, islands of Hawai'i, the development of different industries, as well as information about its volcanoes, ports, and coffee crops. Hawai'i also provided a practical and constructive overview of potential areas for cooperation between Hawai'i and Hainan.

In May 2024, in partnership with the Hainan Foreign Affairs Office, the State of Hawai'i facilitated the visit of Governor Liu Xiaoming of Hainan Province and his delegation to Maryknoll School, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Brigham Young University–Hawai'i, and the Polynesian Cultural Center. Governor Liu extended an invitation for Hawai'i schools to participate in a study tour to Hainan, which will include exchange programs with high schools in the region. The program is scheduled for the summer of 2025.

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 Hawai'i and China, emphasized the importance of this connection to foster closer cultural and economic ties between the two regions.

In August 2023, Hainan Province sent a delegation of ten officials, led by Vice Governor of the People's Government of Hainan Province, H.E. Mr Chen Huaiyu, who met with Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke to promote bilateral economic and trade exchanges, particularly cooperation in trade of agricultural products, and to discuss cooperation and opportunities in the fields of tourism, culture and people-to-people exchanges between Hawai'i and Hainan. The delegation also held a Hainan Free Trade Port promotion event in Hawai'i to introduce the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port and its

preferential policies, to attract and encourage Hawai'i companies to take advantage of this Free Trade Port to export to China.

The Hainan Foreign Affairs Office invited the State of Hawai'i to the 24<sup>th</sup> Island Tourism Policy Forum (ITOP) in November 2023. The forum was the first to be held in-person after a three-year gap following the global pandemic. The meeting brought together officials to experience the scenery, culture, and achievements of Hainan.

### **Taiwan (1993)**

In November 2024, His Excellency Lai Ching-te of Taiwan visited Hawai'i for his first overseas protocol trip, marking a significant moment in the deepening relationship between Taiwan and Hawai'i. During his visit, he toured the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, and the East-West Center. In the evening, His Excellency Lai Ching-te hosted a reception that brought together leaders from Hawai'i's political, business, and cultural sectors. His visit to Hawai'i fostered deeper connections and provided a platform for discussing future collaboration on trade, education, innovation, and sustainability, emphasized Taiwan's commitment to strengthening its ties with Hawai'i, while also celebrating the cultural and historical bonds between the two regions.

In November 2024, the State of Hawai'i Office in Taipei (SHOT) assisted the Hawai'i Coffee Association (HCA) from Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council (SHAC) to participate in the 2024 Taiwan International Coffee Show. During the three-day trade show, SHOT also assisted in organizing a coffee cupping event for Hawai'i coffee to attract buyers in Taipei. There were five farmers from Hawai'i who attended the cupping event.

In October 2024, a delegation led by Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, along with Senator Lynn DeCoite, Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, and Senator Joy San Buenaventura, participated in a Taiwan government funded trade mission to Taiwan.

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

In June 2024, Taiwan sent the largest delegation of 326 delegates to the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC). Taiwan attended this festival for the first time, marking an important milestone for both Taiwan and the Pacific Island nations in terms of cultural exchange and diplomacy.

In October 2023, the Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOFA) and Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Honolulu invited Hawai'i State legislators to Taiwan to promote cooperation and exchanges in tourism, agriculture, culture, education, and trade.

In November 2023, the Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council (SHAC) and Hawai'i Coffee Association (HCA) attended the 2023 Taiwan International Coffee Show to introduce Hawai'i Coffee to the Taiwan market. This event was held concurrently with the Coffee Show and HAC also held a cupping event at Cuiqu Coffee in Taipei.

In 2023, Hawai'i and Taiwan celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Sister-State Relationship; however, due to the Maui Wildfires, Hawai'i and Taiwan postponed the commemorative celebration.

To assist the Hawai'i state government and victims on Maui, the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) pledged \$500,000 for recovery from wildfires on August 22, 2023. TECO in Honolulu, an official mission embraced humanitarian diplomacy to strengthen ties between Taiwan and the state of Hawai'i, also initiated and coordinated a fundraising campaign among the communities of Taiwanese Americans and Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This campaign raised \$155,260.

Another donation came from the Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce of North America (TCCNA) which raised funds among their members around North America. On behalf of all the members, Mr. Joey Chiang, President of TCCNA, visited Honolulu on September 18, 2023, to present a check of \$145,528 to the Hawaii Community Foundation. TECO in Honolulu Director General Richard Lin, Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, State Representative Adrian Tam, and State Representative Troy Hashimoto were also invited to the check presentation ceremony.

Including all donations, the Taiwan government and Taiwanese American community in Hawai'i and North America have donated more than \$800,000 in aggregate to assist with reconstruction following wildfires in Hawai'i.

### **INDIA**

#### **Goa (2018)**

The State of Hawai'i and the State of Goa signed a Sister-State Agreement on October 28, 2018. According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the agreement expires three years after the initial signing, which was October 2021, unless both parties agree to continue the relationship. DBEDT has reached out to officials in Goa inquiring about their desire to continue the relationship but have not heard back at the time of the writing of this report.

At this writing the Sister-State Agreement with Goa has expired.

## **INDONESIA**

### **Bali, Indonesia (2014)**

No activities reported for 2023-2024.

## **JAPAN**

### **Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit**

The second **Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit** will convene in Honolulu in May, 2026. Plans are underway to increase participation from sister prefectures and sister cities in Japan. The Japan-America Society of Hawai'i (JASH) will again be producing this Summit along with support from DBEDT as they did in 2023.

The inaugural Hawai'i-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 Hawai'i, the Mayors of the City & Counties of Honolulu, Kaua'i, Maui and Hawai'i, 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 Hawai'i and the six prefectures.

The State of Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i shares with Japan.

### **Fukuoka Prefecture (1981)**

The Hawai'i Fukuoka Kenjin Kai (HFKK) is the point-of-contact for many activities that support the Hawai'i-Fukuoka Sister-State Relationship together with the Fukuoka Prefectural Government. There were numerous visits and activities that took place in 2024 as follows:

January 2024 – Legislative Opening - 12 members of the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly attended the Opening of the Hawai'i State Legislature.

During 2024, the *One Health* initiative received much attention as a high profile and priority initiative for Fukuoka Prefecture. One of the first steps in solidifying an agreement with the State of Hawai'i was the signing of a Joint-Affirmation between the State of Hawai'i and Fukuoka Prefecture which was signed by Governor Josh Green and Governor Seitaro Hattori in May, 2024.

In July 2024, JASH sent four Junior Ambassadors to Fukuoka to represent Hawai'i at the 36th Asian-Pacific Children's Convention (APCC), a ten-day international camp. The delegates met peers from over 60 countries and participated in cultural activities,

including performing Oli Mahalo and hula at the *We are the BRIDGE Festival*. They also visited Lixil, a partner company of the APCC, and Yokote Elementary School, where they shared their experiences with the local community. During their homestay with volunteer families, the Junior Ambassadors developed lasting friendships and learned about Japanese culture firsthand. JASH has been the liaison office for Hawai'i's delegation to APCC since 2003, fostering international goodwill and exchange.

In September, 2024, Governor Josh Green, M.D. and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green, led a delegation from Hawai'i to Fukuoka Prefecture. According to the prefecture, this was the first visit by a Hawai'i Governor in the past 40 years. The purpose of the visit was to formally sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Fukuoka prefecture that supports the *One Health* Initiative.

*One Health* refers to the concept that treats human health, animal health, and environmental health as one, i.e. "health is one". The State of Hawai'i and Fukuoka Prefecture recognize that human health is closely related to animal and environmental health, as described in this concept, and agreed as follows in order to promote *One Health*.

Based on their respective policy needs, The State of Hawai'i and Fukuoka Prefecture agreed to cooperate on the following activities: (1) Promotion of One Health education and development of professional human resources; (2) Promotion of awareness-raising and policies related to One Health; (3) Organization of international symposiums and other events on the theme of One Health.

*One Health MOU Signing, Governor's Office, Fukuoka Prefetural Government.*



*One Health MOU Signing, Governor's Office, Fukuoka Prefetural Government.*

In December 2024, 15 students from Fukuoka Prefecture traveled to Hawai'i as part of the *One Health* program. Students were welcomed at Waipahu High School and observed and learned about the Health Academy at Waipahu. During their brief stay in Hawai'i, the Fukuoka students also met with education, government and health officials, too.

Other educational visits and exchanges between Fukuoka and Hawai'i occurred as follows:

- Campbell High School students had a unique opportunity in October 2024, when they visited the Kaiyu Maru, a 698-ton Japanese training vessel from Fukuoka. Moored at Aloha Tower, the ship acts as a floating classroom and home for 52 students from Fukuoka Suisan High School on their 4,393-mile journey across the Pacific.
- As part of their sister-state exchange program, Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawai'i launched the culinary exchange project, in which Fukuoka Prefecture sent culinary major students to Hawai'i for a six-day program from June 3, 2024. During this time, the students learned about Hawai'i's food culture by attending lectures at KCC, took part in cooking classes and visited local farms.
- On June 7, 2024, a culinary competition for students from Fukuoka and Hawai'i was held at Kapi'olani Community College (KCC) as part of a youth exchange program between Fukuoka Prefecture and the State of Hawai'i,



with Consul General Kodama's official resident chef, Shotaro Ito participating as one of the judges.



- In 2024, the youth basketball exchange program commenced at Kaimuki High School. There are plans to send Hawai'i students to Fukuoka for a similar program in the future.

In 2023, the international basketball exchange with Fukuoka Prefecture included games between Campbell High School and Saint Louis School. The Campbell boys and girls teams were also invited to play in Fukuoka in November and stayed at Kyushu Sangyo University and experienced dorm life, classes, and cultural experiences in the community.

Representatives of the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation traveled to Hawai'i to meet with HFKK members regarding future exchanges and activities.

In January 2023, the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly members participated in the opening of the Hawai'i State Legislature.

In April 2023, Governor Josh Green hosted Fukuoka Governor Seitaro Hattori and 21 members of his delegation at a reception at Washington Place. During this event both Governors signed a sister-state reaffirmation agreement.

During the summer of 2023, Fukuoka Prefecture and Kapiolani Community College (KCC) entered into an exchange agreement where students from Fukuoka participated in a culinary program at KCC. Students from Hawai'i also had the opportunity to travel to Fukuoka to experience a culinary program there, too.

In July 2023, Fukuoka Vice-Governor Masaru Eguchi participated in the Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit.

Fukuoka Prefecture, the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly and the cities of Yame, Buzen and Ukiha made contributions to the Maui Wildfire relief efforts in excess of \$2,300,000 yen.

On October 17, 2023, the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu hosted guests from Fukuoka Prefectural Fisheries High School. The guests included Vice Principal Katsuyoshi Kominami, the training vessel Kaiyu-maru Captain Hirokazu Totoki and two student representatives. Fifty-four trainees from the school departed mid-September from Japan to spend a month at sea for longline tuna fishing training. Hawai'i was their last port of call during this training program. During their five-day stay in Honolulu, they engaged in exchanges with students from James Campbell High School and participated in a study tour before returning to Fukuoka.

The celebration of the 40th anniversary of Hawai'i's Sister State relationship with Fukuoka resulted in the development of a new sister school relationship between Washington Middle School and Jyoyo Hokuzei Gakuen in Yame City. Both schools have a past connection to the late U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, and principals are committed to having students learn about each other's culture and history and will work together to provide a mutually beneficial student exchange program.

The Japan-America Society of Hawai'i (JASH) has coordinated and facilitated online exchanges between Washington Middle School and Joyo Hokuzei School, located in Yame, Fukuoka, since December 2021. Topics have ranged from sharing about holidays and famous foods and things to do in each city, as well as personal hobbies and likes. Since May 2023, Yame City has been directly taking care of arranging these exchanges, with JASH supporting them as necessary. The next online exchange is scheduled to be held on December 5, 2023, with Hawai'i students sharing about Thanksgiving and Yame students sharing about their hometown.

### **Okinawa Prefecture (1985)**

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

The following is a summary of activities between Hawai'i and Okinawa that occurred in 2024:

In March, 2024, HUOA organized the 34th Annual Student Exchange in Hawai'i and welcomed 15 Okinawa high school students and coordinated homestays and cultural/educational excursions.

In April, 2024, the Annual Okinawa Aisatsu Visit took place when HUOA President and President-Elect traveled to Okinawa to meet with government and business leaders to promote the ongoing relationship with Okinawa such as supporting educational programs in high schools and universities, encourage economic development and promotion of Okinawa and Hawai'i-made products, and promote travel between Okinawa and Hawai'i.

In June, 2024, 15 Hawai'i high school students were selected to participate in a two-week homestay and school immersion program in Okinawa. This is an annual event that

HUOA coordinates for students from Hawai'i. Also held in June, in remembrance and honoring the final day of the battle of Okinawa June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Irei no Hi was held that included activities such as oral histories from civilian survivors from the battle of Okinawa.

HUOA collected and donated over \$670,000.00 to the Maui Strong Fund. The majority of the donations were collected and received from Okinawa corporations, government agencies, municipal offices, and Okinawa residents.

In September, 2024, the 42nd OKINAWAN FESTIVAL was held at the Hawaii Convention Center, involving over 3,000 volunteers and attracting over 50,000 attendees. A contingent from Okinawa also participated in the event.

In October, 2024, the 125th Anniversary of Immigration Aisatsu Trip was held to finalize invitations to members of government, corporations, and community organizations for events being held throughout the year-long celebration of the 125th Anniversary of Okinawan Immigration to Hawai'i. The annual Heritage Tour was held and included 16 participants who traveled to Okinawa to learn about their heritage, met with government leaders, and participated in hands on activities.

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 Hawai'i Uchinanchu members and Okinawa friends and relatives can be perpetuated.

In March 2023, the 33rd Annual Student Exchange in Hawai'i was completed. HUOA welcomed 15 Okinawa high school students and coordinated homestay and cultural/educational excursions.

In June 2023, 15 Hawai'i high school students participated in a two-week homestay and school immersion program in Okinawa.

During the Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit, one of the goals of the summit was to re-invigorate and strengthen Hawai'i and Japan's connection that was on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. Okinawa Prefecture Governor Denny Tamaki was the keynote speaker on the first day of the Summit, followed by Mayor Hideo Tobaru from Kumejima Cho. This preceded the panel on sustainable energy – which the Hawai'i-Okinawa partnership has been working on for over a decade in their commitment to clean and efficient energy development and deployment. In conjunction with the Summit, HUOA hosted an Aloha Party to welcome officials from Okinawa and celebrate Hawai'i-Okinawa relations.

In September 2023, 11 HUOA members representing different clubs traveled to Okinawa to meet with the Governor and Mayors of their respective ancestral clubs. In addition, invitations were presented for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Okinawan Immigration celebration in Hawai'i in 2025.

The 41<sup>st</sup> Okinawan Festival was held at the Hawai'i Convention Center in September that attracted over 50,000 attendees, some from Okinawa, too.

In October 2023, 23 HUOA members participated in the annual HUOA Heritage (Study) and traveled to Okinawa to learn about their heritage and experienced meetings with government leaders and participated in hands-on activities. Also in October, a delegation of 16 individuals representing the Okinawa Association of Corporate

Executives traveled to Hawai'i and met with State officials. The group's travel objectives were to study potential overseas business opportunities in advanced overseas locations in the U.S. The group met with Hawai'i Department of Transportation officials to discuss issues and countermeasures in Hawai'i related to traffic congestion. They were also interested in learning how Hawai'i met the challenge of labor shortages as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

HUOA established the YUIMAARU Maui fundraiser in Hawai'i and in Okinawa to assist the resident of Lahaina impacted by the August 8<sup>th</sup> wildfires. Contributions received at that time exceeded \$200,000.

### **Hiroshima Prefecture (1997)**

Since the establishment of the Hawai'i-Hiroshima Sister-State Relationship, the Hiroshima Hawai'i 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.

In 2024, the HHSSC initiated and participated in the following programs/events with the help of the Honolulu Hiroshima *Kenjin Kai* (HHKK):

Hiroshima International Student Exchange Program: In 2024, three (3) students, Haku Saigusa, Cole Kikkawa, and Riley Regan, along with a chaperone from HHKK, traveled to Hiroshima for this informative educational opportunity. Along with meeting other youth from around the world, experiencing homestay, and having a private meeting with Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki, the group attended the Hiroshima Peace

Ceremony on August 6, 2024. In addition, Kaiser High School also sent one student and one teacher to the Hiroshima Junior International Forum.

Also in August 2024, The Japan-America Society of Hawai'i's (JASH) Hiroshima Peace Scholar Program sent two high school students from Oahu on a transformative nine-day trip to Hiroshima. The students stayed with host families, met Japanese students, and attended a Peace Forum hosted by Hiroshima Jogakuin High School. They engaged in meaningful conversations with atomic bomb survivors and learned about efforts to create a worldwide culture of peace. Their trip included visits to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum, where they advocated for the abolition of nuclear weapons by collecting signatures. The program concluded with their participation in the 79th Annual Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6, marking the anniversary of the atomic bombing.

On February 13, 2024, the HHKK developed and staffed booths to promote Hiroshima at the Japanese Consulate of Hawaii at an event to recognize the Emperor's Birthday. HHKK was fortunate to receive promotional brochures, etc. from the Hiroshima Prefectural and Hiroshima City Governments to promote the culture and uniqueness of Hiroshima.

Planning and Executing of the Hiroshima Commemoration and Peace Service (HCPS) in Honolulu: The HCPS was held in Honolulu to honor the victims and those (or *hibakusha*) whose lives were affected by the unprecedented bombing of Hiroshima 79 years ago. They were honored that the speakers, Mr. Stephen Miwa and Mr. Kai Uyehara, were members of the HHKK.

HHKK also assisted the Miwa Family in their Promotion of their "Diary." HHKK has been helping Mr. Stephen Miwa and his Peace Foundation in the promotion of his late father, Mr. Larry Miwa's dairy, "Gambare Hiroshima – Don't Give Up!" Mr. Larry Miwa was a

*hibakusha* and witnessed the tragic bombing of Hiroshima. The family made a donation equivalent to \$10,000 to several Hiroshima organizations and 500 copies of his "Diary," published in Japanese and English. Other monetary donations of funds were made to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (\$25,000) in Geneva, Switzerland, the Anne Frank House (\$2,500) in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and the American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-Bomb Survivors (\$1,000) in Los Angeles, California.

Mr. Wayne Miyao, President of HHKK continued to work with Pearl Harbor officials and the Hiroshima Peace Park and Museum on programs/exchanges that will promote both parks and peace. From August 17-21, 2024, HHKK assisted Pearl Harbor officials in hosting a delegation from Hiroshima City, which comprised of five high school students and two *hibakusha*. HHKK developed the group's itinerary and also provided "homestay" opportunities for students from Hiroshima.

Other educational visits and exchanges between Hiroshima and Hawai'i occurred as follows:

- Approximately 300 students from Hiroshima's Kokutaiji High School participated in a high school exchange program with Moanalua High School.
- There also were virtual meetings held between the Hiroshima Global Academy (HGA) and Hawai'i schools related to opportunities for tuition waivers being granted to Hawai'i students attending HGA.

In 2023, the HHSSC initiated and participated in the following programs and events in collaboration with Honolulu Hiroshima *Kenjin Kai* (HHKK):

The HHKK selected two students from Hawai'i to participate in its International Student Exchange Program. The students traveled to Hiroshima and engaged in a positive educational opportunity.



The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Otafuku Sauce company was held in Honolulu. HHKK and HHSSC assisted Otafuku with a Hawaiian vacation for its employees. Otafuku has supported Hawai'i in many ways including welcoming Hawai'i officials to visit its factory in Hiroshima and donating its famous okonomiyaki sauce on many occasions.

Hiroshima hosted the Hiroshima Junior International Forum in 2023, which was held after the G7 Summit was held in Hiroshima. 85 high school students from 24 countries participated in this event. The State of Hawai'i was represented by one student.

Both HHKK and HHSSC hosted the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kamotsuru Sake Brewery's sales management in Honolulu to promote the sake within the state. Kamotsuru is the official sake of the HHKK since 2016. The Hiroshima-based sake brewery also has supported organizations on Hawai'i Island such as the East Hawai'i Hiroshima *Kenjin Kai* and Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Hiroshima Prefecture was well represented during the Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit by Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki and members of his delegation. Governor Yuzaki spoke during a panel discussion with former State Senator Brian Taniguchi and facilitated by Mr. Paul Yonamine, Chairman Emeritus, Central Pacific Bank.

A major undertaking by Mr. Wayne Miyao, President of the HHKK and HHSSC, was the establishment of a Sister-Park relationship between Pearl Harbor and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. World War II in the Pacific tragically started on December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor and ended with the unfortunate bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Although Hiroshima and Hawai'i are linked by war, the Sister-Park relationship will promote peace, goodwill and reconciliation. In April 2023, Mr. Miyao was contacted by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, the U.S. Consulate in Osaka, and the office of Hiroshima's Mayor. After a lengthy process, an agreement was reached and signed on

June 29, 2023, by U.S. Ambassador Rahm Emanuel and Hiroshima's Mayor Kazumi Matsui at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.

Mr. Miyao was invited to participate in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Service on August 6, 2023, along with U.S. Ambassador Emanuel and many foreign dignitaries. He was received warmly by the citizens of Hiroshima, including the *hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bomb) and participated in a press conference with Mayor Matsui.

In September, Ohana Arts presented Peace on Your Wings in Hiroshima. The performance included 25 students from Hawai'i and a total delegation of 50 participants.

Also in September 2023, the Hawai'i Department of Education (HDOE) led a delegation of elementary and middle school students and faculty to Hiroshima. The experiences shared by students confirmed the impact of these international visits for students to learn about complex global issues that they can hopefully apply to innovative solutions during their education journey.

DBEDT led a legislative delegation to Hiroshima in August 2023. Legislative leaders had the opportunity to meet with Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki. They also met with the owner of the Hiroshima Toyo Carp Baseball team and the president of Hiroshima Mazda Motor Corporation, owner of a restaurant in Hawai'i.

Hiroshima Prefecture and citizenry made contributions to the Maui Wildfire relief efforts totaling in excess of 9,250,000 yen.

### **Ehime Prefecture (2003)**

On February 9, 2024, JASH hosted the 23rd anniversary memorial ceremony for the tragic USS Greenville collision with the Ehime Maru training vessel. Governor Tokihiro

Nakamura, along with officials from Ehime Prefecture and the victims' families, attended the ceremony to honor the lives lost. In the summer of 2024, two University of Hawai'i students traveled to Matsuyama, Ehime, for a summer internship, where they promoted Hawai'i in local schools and communities. From September 27 to October 1, 2024, JASH welcomed ten high school students from Ehime for a cultural exchange, which included a two-day homestay program and visits to local landmarks. The students presented their culture through calligraphy and *kendama* activities while interacting with their Hawaiian peers.

In September 2024, Governor Josh Green, M.D. and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green led a delegation to Ehime. During the visit, delegation members met with Governor Tokihiro Nakamura and Ehime Prefectural Assembly officials at a networking event hosted by Ehime Prefecture. Both governors encouraged building relationships through educational exchanges such as the annual program sponsored by the Ehime Prefecture International Center's (EPIC) Ehime-Hawai'i High School Exchange program held in Hawai'i.

Governor Green and the Hawai'i delegation also visited Matsuyama Minami (South) High School that previously conducted a research project with Waipahu High School. Governor Green also commended Ehime for continuing activities such as the Ehime-Hawai'i Goodwill Youth Baseball Tournament which was suspended due to the global pandemic.

In November 2024, over 80 Hawai'i youth baseball players and their families traveled to Ehime and participated in baseball games, met with government officials, and learned about the culture of Ehime Prefecture.

Ehime Prefecture also contributed funds toward the Maui Wildfire relief program. This contribution was an example of the prefecture's strong commitment to the State of Hawai'i.

In February 2024, Governor Nakamura led a delegation of officials from Ehime Prefecture to Hawai'i. This visit was made to honor the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hawai'i-Ehime Sister-State Relationship. Governor Nakamura also met with Governor Green to acknowledge prior activities and anticipate future activities with Ehime.

Ehime Prefecture was represented by its Vice Governor during the Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit in July 2023.

In September, 2023, the Ehime Prefecture International Center's (EPIC) Ehime-Hawai'i High School Exchange program was held in Hawai'i. The annual educational program included a visit to the Ehime Maru Memorial at the Kakaako Waterfront Park.

In October 2023, the Executive Committee of the Ehime-Hawai'i Goodwill Youth Baseball, led by Ehime Prefectural Assembly Member, Junnosuke Kaino, signed an International Program Agreement with Dr. Ken Ito, of the Asia Pacific Exchange and Development (APED), to reestablish the Ehime-Hawai'i Goodwill Baseball Exchange, which was suspended due to the global pandemic. This memorandum of understanding was signed at the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu. The youth baseball tournament that started in 2002 will continue again from 2024.

Also, during the October 2023 visit, the Executive Committee of the Ehime-Hawai'i Goodwill Youth Baseball met with Misaki Takabayashi, Chancellor of Kapiolani Community College (KCC) to establish potential educational exchanges between Matsuyama University and KCC. Earlier in the day, the group paid respects at the grave site of Dr. Seiji Naya, former DBEDT Director, who was instrumental in creating the exchanges with Ehime Prefecture through youth baseball.

## Hokkaido Prefecture (2017)

JASH collaborated with Japan's Soshi Educational Group to host the Hokkaido Snow Camp (HSC) from January 13 to 19, 2024, for ten Hawai'i high school students. This all-expenses-paid trip allowed the students to engage in cultural exchanges with local students at Clark Memorial International High School in Sapporo. In addition to exploring the city of Sapporo and experiencing snowboarding, students participated in an Environmental Summit where they learned about the indigenous Ainu people and climate change. Vice-Governor Hamasaka of Hokkaido welcomed the students to the summit, where they worked in groups to create proposals promoting environmental sustainability. The program also introduced participants to educational opportunities in Japan after high school, broadening their global perspectives. In April, JASH welcomed ten students from Clark Memorial International High School for a reciprocal program in Hawai'i, where they stayed with local families and visited cultural sites such as the Bishop Museum, Pearl Harbor, Hanauma Bay, and a *lo'i* (taro patch), reconnecting with the Hawaii students who had visited Hokkaido earlier that year.

During the Fall of 2024, the Hokkaido Intercultural and Technological High School sent 300 students to Kaiser High School as part of their high school exchange program.

In January 2023, Hokkaido Prefecture sent a delegation of 40 people to Hawai'i that included government officials, students and representatives of the Ainu people. DBEDT welcomed the delegation with a reception at Washington Place. Representatives of the Hokkaido Club in Hawai'i and other community leaders were represented.

During the January 2023 visit, five Hokkaido school students participated in a student exchange program. In March, Obihiro Hakuyo High School and Kalani High School signed a sister-school agreement. This was followed by Kalani High School visiting Obihiro Hakuyo High School in the summer of 2023. During the month of October,

Anuenue School traveled to Hokkaido. Hokkaido has had great interest in learning how the Hawaiian Immersion School developed its curriculum. Also in October, Kokusai Joho High School visited Kaiser High School. All of the above educational exchanges were planned and organized, in partnership, between the Hawai'i Department of Education and the Hokkaido Board of Education.

Hokkaido Prefecture was well represented during the Hawai'i-Japan Sister-Summit in July 2023. The prefecture's exhibit was one of the most popular during the Summit. Hokkaido's support of the Maui Wildfire relief efforts included total contributions of 3,439,552 yen of which 1,000,000 yen was donated by the Hokkaido Government and 1,000,000 yen was donated by the Hokkaido Legislative Assembly. The remaining 1,439,552 yen was collected from among the employees of the Hokkaido Government.

During 2023, the Hokkaido Hawai'i Club traveled to Hokkaido on a number of occasions, promoted Hokkaido Genghis Khan cuisine hosted by the Hokkaido People's Association, promoted Hokkaido ramen at a festival in Honolulu, and hosted a luncheon meeting welcoming the Hokkaido Prefectural delegation to Hawai'i during Hawai'i Sister-Summit. During the visit, in addition to the customary courtesy visits with Governor Naomichi Suzuki and Assembly Members in Hokkaido, the Hokkaido Prefectural Government hosted an anniversary reception in honor of Governor Ige and the Hawai'i delegation. Attendees were also treated to a live performance by the Ainu who are indigenous citizens of Hokkaido.

International educational exchanges are important to the Hokkaido Prefectural Government similar to Hawai'i's interest in fostering and nurturing student exchanges between Hawai'i and Hokkaido. In this regard, the prefecture hosted an Educational Roundtable with Governor Ige and other Hawai'i representatives as well as the Superintendent of the Hokkaido Board of Education and representatives of universities

and high schools. The dialogue encouraged increasing educational exchanges between Hawai'i and Hokkaido beginning in 2023.

The Hawai'i delegation also had an opportunity to visit the Kokusai Johou High School to better understand a typical school day for students. The students also treated the Hawai'i visitors with a performance that demonstrated their command of the English language.

### **Yamaguchi Prefecture (2022)**

In 2024, the Honolulu Yamaguchi *Kenjin Kai* (HYK) engaged in numerous activities with Yamaguchi City and Prefecture as follows:

Aloha Reception for Yamaguchi City Mayor Kazuki Ito on October 13, 2024, in Honolulu: Nearly 70 HYK members hosted a welcome reception for Mayor Ito and two other members of Mayor Ito's staff from Yamaguchi City.

Visit to Yamaguchi City - October 28-29, 2024: HYK board members Tad Iwata, Lori Endo, and Gail Wakatake traveled to Yamaguchi City and joined the Honolulu City Council delegation as they met with the Yamaguchi City Council to discuss plans for the Friendship City agreement between the two capital cities of the sister-states Yamaguchi Prefecture and the State of Hawai'i. This included a formal meeting with Mayor Ito and Yamaguchi City City Council Chairperson Sachie Irie and the Honolulu City Council delegation.

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.

In January 2024, Kauai High School, Kapaa High School, Waimea High School and Kalani High School met with 160 students from Yamaguchi Prefecture. Also in 2024, Yamaguchi High School and Roosevelt High School participated in a virtual meeting to discuss future educational exchange opportunities.

In January 2023, Vice Governor Hiraya led a delegation of 20 officials and 160 students to Hawai'i. During this visit, the Hawai'i State Legislature and the Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly signed a legislative friendship agreement. Also, during this visit, the signing of a sister agreement between the Hawai'i Department of Education and the Yamaguchi Prefectural Board of Education was held at the Ohana Waikiki East Outrigger Hotel. The Honolulu Yamaguchi *Kenjin Kai* also hosted the visiting delegation from Yamaguchi Prefecture to an Aloha Reception that included club members from Honolulu.

Vice Governor Hiraya and members of his delegation also made a courtesy call on Governor Josh Green. In recognition of this visit and the sister-state agreement, DBEDT hosted a reception at Washington Place.

In July 2023, Governor Tsugumasa Muraoka and Prefectural Assembly Chairperson Yanai participated in the Hawai'i-Japan Sister Summit. Coinciding with this event, the 6<sup>th</sup> Overseas Yamaguchi *Kenjin Kai* World Grand Meeting was co-hosted by the Yamaguchi Prefectural Government and the Honolulu Yamaguchi *Kenjin Kai* and attended by representatives of Yamaguchi, Brazil, Shanghai, Los Angeles, Kaua'i, Kona



and Honolulu. The World Grand meeting also included exchanges between youth from Brazil, Los Angeles, Kaua'i and Honolulu *Kenjin Kai* Clubs.

On October 16, 2023, Mr. Kiyotaka Fujimoto, Mayor of Suo-Oshima Town of Yamaguchi Prefecture visited the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu. In 1885, many residents from the town immigrated to Hawai'i when the system of *Kanyaku-Imin*, or contract laborer immigrants, first began. This year marked the 60th anniversary of the town's sisterhood with the County of Kaua'i. Consul General Yoshinori Kodama shared that he was impressed by the longstanding friendly relationship between Suo-Oshima Town and Hawai'i and expressed his hope for further expansion of exchanges.

Yamaguchi Prefecture has a four-year project funded by Japan's Ministry of Defense to support (1) increasing their students' English proficiency, (2) doing it with Hawai'i schools (3) having students develop projects that are both local and global in scope, and (4) improving relations between the residents on the U.S. Marine Corps Air Base in Iwakuni and the surrounding community.

Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly Chairperson Yanai visited Governor Josh Green and pledged 1,000,000 yen to the Maui Wildfire relief efforts. In addition, Yamaguchi Prefecture, its citizens, and organizations contributed in excess of 6,000,000 yen.

### **KOREA**

#### **Jeju Province (1986)**

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke led a delegation of Hawai'i leaders to Korea, where bonds between the two regions were deepened.

In Seoul, they met with Mayor Oh Se-hoon and discussed the shared commitment to investing in early childhood education, focusing on how to uplift families and communities in both Hawai'i and Korea.

In Jeju, Governor Oh Young-hun and Lieutenant Luke spoke about the challenges of climate change and renewable energy, recognizing that islands like ours must lead the way in sustainable development.



*Members of the Hawai'i delegation meeting Jeju Provincial Governor Oh Young-hun.*

During the delegation's meeting with the Jeju Tourism Organization, whose innovative approaches to eco-friendly tourism align closely with Hawai'i's Mālama Hawai'i campaign, both regions vowed to protect the natural beauty that sustains people and visitors of Korea and Hawai'i.

The Lieutenant Governor also met with some of Korea's leading businesses in technology, tourism, and aviation.

This visit reaffirmed the deep cultural and economic ties between Hawai'i and Korea, while opening new doors for collaboration in education, sustainability, and tourism.

In 2024, the Hawai'i Department of Education participated in a virtual and in-person program during the Jeju International Youth Forum. 15 students and four chaperones representing Farrington, Kalani, Kapolei and Waipahu High Schools attended the forum

In October 2023, Hawai'i was represented during the Jeju International Youth Forum where 200 participants, including 31 city and 13 country representatives, convened in Jeju. The Hawai'i Department of Education sent four high school teams to participate in this international event.

### **MOROCCO**

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

No activities reported in 2023-2024.

### **PHILIPPINES**

DBEDT, in partnership with the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i (FCCH) and supported by the Philippine Consulate General of Honolulu and Hawai'i-Philippines Business Economic Council, presented the Hawai'i-Philippines Sister Province Symposium on March 13, 2024, at the Hawai'i Convention Center.

The goal of the symposium was to strengthen and maximize opportunities by the sister relationships between Hawai'i and the Philippines. Leaders from government, business, culture, the community and educational sectors took part in a series of panels and discussions on a wide array of subjects. In particular, the Symposium covered topics on workforce development, import-export opportunities, sustainability, energy and infrastructure, and tourism. Approximately 150 attendees gathered for the Symposium.



*Matthew Marcos Manotoc, Governor of Ilocos Norte Province.*

### **Ilocos Sur Province (1985)**

On their 31<sup>st</sup> Trade Mission to the Philippines, the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i visited Vigan City, Ilocos Sur province. Trade Mission delegates toured the historic town of Vigan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its cobblestone streets and colonial Spanish and Philippine architecture dating back to the late 1500s. Delegates subsequently conducted courtesy calls with Vigan City Mayor Bonito Singson and Ilocos Sur Governor Jerry Singson.

### **Cebu Province, Philippines (1996)**

No activities reported for 2023-2024.

### **Pangasinan Province (2002)**

No activities reported for 2023-2024.

### **Ilocos Norte Province (2005)**

Governor Matthew Marcos Manotoc of Ilocos Norte was the keynote speaker during the Hawai'i-Philippines Sister Province Symposium. Governor Manotoc is the nephew of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., and the grandson of former President Ferdinand Marcos and First Lady Imelda Marcos.

Before attending the Symposium, Governor Manotoc joined community members for a reception held at Washington Place hosted by the State of Hawai'i. The reception was well-attended and drew a crowd of nearly 200 guests.



### **Isabela Province (2006)**

No activities reported for 2023-2024.

### **PORTUGAL**

### **Azores Islands (1982)**

No activities reported for 2023-2024.

**Madeira (202X approved, but not signed yet)**

The Hawai'i Sister-State Committee was tasked by the Hawai'i legislature to consider a sister-state relationship with Madeira, Portugal. The Hawai'i Sister-State Committee met on November 16, 2021, to consider the application for Madeira, Portugal and Hawai'i to form a sister-state relationship. This was a very strong application with many people and organizations in Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i legislature of the Committee's decision. Due to the COVID19 pandemic an official signing ceremony has not been scheduled yet although discussions have begun with the Consulate General of Portugal in San Francisco, which covers Hawai'i.