

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **JAL to Support Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit Organized by the Japan-America Society of Hawaii**

(Honolulu, HI) The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH) and Japan Airlines (JAL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Friday, March 7, at 9:30 am at the JASH office located at 1600 Kapiolani Blvd, Ste 204.

The MOU signifies a partnership between JAL and JASH in preparation for the second Sister Summit between the state and counties of Hawaii and the prefectures and cities in Japan, which is scheduled for May 2026 in Honolulu. JASH is the lead coordinator for the Sister Summit.



Left: Karen Knudsen, Board Chair, Japan - America Society of Hawaii  
Right: Kaori Nishiharaguchi, Deputy Senior Vice President – Sales and Marketing,  
Senior Vice President - Tokyo at Japan Airlines

Kaori Nishiharaguchi, Deputy Senior Vice President of Japan Airlines said, “For over 70 years, Japan Airlines has been connecting Hawaii and Japan. We are now excited to collaborate with JASH to further develop exchange programs between sister cities through our support of the Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit.”

Karen Knudsen, JASH Board Chair said, “JASH will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2026 and remains dedicated to fostering connections between the people of Japan and Hawaii. We are thrilled to partner with Japan Airlines, a valued member of JASH for almost 40 years, to further enhance the Japan-Hawaii relationship during our Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit.”



**JAPAN AIRLINES**



**JAPAN-AMERICA  
SOCIETY of HAWAII**

## **BACKGROUND**

- **Partnership Announcement:** The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH) and Japan Airlines (JAL) have partnered to support and promote the **2nd Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit**.
- **Event Details:** The summit is scheduled for **May 2026**.
- **Organizations Involved:**
  - **JASH:** Headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, with Board Chair Karen Knudsen and President Reyna Kaneko.
  - **JAL:** Headquartered in Shinagawa, Tokyo, with President Mitsuko Tottori.

## **Goals of the Partnership**

- JAL will assist JASH as the secretariat in Japan, where JASH does not have a branch.
- Deepen exchanges between municipalities already connected with Hawaii.
- Expand sister city partnerships between new cities in Hawaii and Japan.
- Strengthen exchanges between Hawaii and Japan through the 2nd Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit in May 2026.

## **Background of the Partnership**

JASH's mission is to strengthen the friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States, focusing on goodwill, economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and building connections between Hawaii and international entities. As the world recovers from the pandemic, JASH is dedicated to revitalizing the sister relationship between Japan and Hawaii to ensure strong, mutually beneficial partnerships.

JAL, as a major Japanese airline with strong ties and connections to Hawaii for over 70 years, is uniquely positioned to support this initiative. JAL has a long history of fostering cultural and economic exchanges between Japan and Hawaii through its extensive network and resources. By participating as the liaison for municipalities in Japan, JAL aims to expand sister city partnerships and support the Hawaii-Japan Sister State & Sister City Summit. JAL enhances its corporate value by generating both social and economic impact through travel, aiming to foster meaningful connections between Japanese regions and their overseas sister cities. Through their partnership, JAL and JASH seek to further strengthen these bonds.

This partnership was established with the shared goal of both parties to stimulate exchanges that strengthen the connection between Japan and Hawaii. By leveraging their unique strengths and resources, JASH and JAL are committed to fostering deeper cultural, economic, and social ties between the two regions, ensuring a prosperous and collaborative future for both Hawaii and Japan.