

DRAFT

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM (DBEDT)

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT DIVISION (BDSD)

MINUTES OF THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021, AT 10:00 A.M. VIA ZOOM

Committee Members Present were:

Jean E. Rolles (Vice Chair)	-	East-West Center (Interim Appointment)
Kay Matsui	-	Hawaii State Association of Counties
Kaho'okeleholu Hannahs	-	Native Hawaiian Cultural Organization
Debra Nakama	-	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Eduardo Topenio, Jr.	-	President of the Senator

Guests were:

Tyler Dos Santos-Tam	-	Honorary Consul of Portugal in Honolulu
Gerald De Mello	-	Hawaii Island
Danny Abreu	-	Community Member
Willetta Martin-Centeio	-	Vice President, Hawaii Council on Portuguese Heritage & Leeward Oahu
Fred Freitas Hemmings	-	Former State Senator & Surfer/Portuguese

Committee Administration:

Margaret Ahn	-	Attorney General
Dennis Ling	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Mark Ritchie	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Leslie Kawamoto	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Timothy Tiu	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Lyle Fujikawa	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Marlene Hiraoka	-	DBEDT/BDSD
Selma Malcolm	-	DBEDT/BDSD

CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Rolles on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 10:07 a.m., via ZOOM, who welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting in support of the Madeira Sister-State application.

Mr. Ritchie conducted a rollcall of the committee members: Vice Chair Rolles Ms. Matsui, Mr. Hannahs, Ms. Nakama and Mr. Topenio. He then introduced the DBEDT staff and asked Mr. Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Honorary Consul of Portugal in Hawaii to introduce himself and guests.

APPROVAL OF TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2021 MEETING MINUTES:

The minutes were distributed and reviewed by the Committee Members. Vice-Chair Rolles asked if there were any comments or corrections to the Minutes. Hearing none, she requested a motion to approve the Minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Topenio and seconded by Mr. Hannahs to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, March 15, 2021, unamended.

The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC TESTAMONY:

Vice Chair Rolles invited members of the public to testify on the agenda items, and hearing none, she proceeded with the rest of the agenda items.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Review of Current Committee Members' Terms:

Mr. Ritchie reported that Ms. Debra Nakama's term had expired and as a result, the position is vacant. Also, that he would notify the current members when their terms are coming up for expirations. Mr. Ritchie then noted that the Legislature and the Boards and Commissions are working on new nominees for the Sister-State Committee, but the process is a little slow.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Discussion and Recommendation on Sister-State Application for Madeira, Portugal:

At this point, Vice Chair Rolles invited Mr. Santos-Tam to present his recommendations to the Committee.

Mr. Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Honorary Council of Portugal in Hawaii presented background information on the connection between Hawaii and Portugal in his support for a sister-state relationship between Madeira in Portugal and the State of Hawaii. He stated that Hawaii and Portugal have a long-standing historic relationship dated back to 1878 when the first Portuguese immigrants specifically from Madeira and the Azores Islands arrived in Hawaii to work in the sugarcane plantation and quickly became integrated with the Hawaiian people.

Mr. Santos-Tam also stated that the immigrants from Madeira shared their cultures with the people of Hawaii which included their food (malasadas, linguica which became known as Portuguese sausages & Portuguese bean soup, etc.); music/ukulele' and various festivals which are still parts of the Hawaii cultures today.

Mr. Santos-Tam reported that in 1982, a sister-state relationship was formed between the State of Hawaii and the Azores but for some unknown reasons, none was established with Madeira which was where the other half of the Portuguese immigrants to Hawaii came from. However, he felt that a sister-state relationship with Madeira could play a role in the renewal of the current relationship with the Azores.

Mr. Santos-Tam indicated that over the past year, he has been in contact with individuals in Madeira and during Summer 2021, he visited Madeira and participated in tours with their government.

Mr. Santos-Tam then thanked DBEDT staff for processing their application for a sister-state. He submitted several letters to DBEDT/committee from various government organizations, individuals, etc., with unwavering support of their quest for a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira in Portugal.

Testimony in Support of the Application for a Sister-State: Testimonies in support of establishing a sister-state relationship between Madeira and the State of Hawaii were received from Mr. Gerald De Mello, Mr. Danny Abreu, Ms. Willetta Martin-Centeio, Mr. Fred Freitas Hemmings and Kumo Paul.

- (1) Mr. Gerald DeMello of Hawaii Island in his testimony stated that he is part of a six-generation family from Madeira and he was very excited that the entire State would be involved in the relationship when it happens. He noted that a sister-state relationship could bring opportunities to foster educational, economic, cultural and scientific exchange between both Hawaii and Madeira. Also, that ocean science and research on fisheries could be areas of collaboration. He indicated that two (2) individuals at the University of Hawaii in Hilo are exploring the idea of a student exchange program with Madeira University and as they move forward, it would help to cement a sister-state relationship. Mr. DeMello then expressed a very strongly support for a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii Madeira. He thanked the DBEDT staff and the committee members for their support and also for the opportunity to testify.
- (2) Mr. Daniel Abreu, Community Member also testified. He thanked the staff of DBEDT and the committee members for the hard work they have done in arranging the meeting. He also expressed tremendous support for a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira. He indicated that a

relationship between Hawaii and Madeira has always been his dream because his ancestors had sacrifice so much to come to the “promised land”/Hawaii.

- (3) Ms. Willetta Martin-Centeio, Vice President of the Hawaii Council on Portuguese Heritage which bring together all the various Portuguese organizations in Hawaii. She is also a fourth generation of Portuguese descendants from Madeira. While sharing her Portuguese heritage with the meeting, Ms. Martin-Centeio indicated that over the past 30-years, the Portuguese descendants in Hawaii have been celebrating their annual Portuguese festivals with the people of Hawaii which includes ethnic foods, entertainment, cultural displays and various activities for the children. Also, that the Portuguese community organizations are maintaining their culture through music/ukulele and cultural dances., etc. Ms. Martin-Centeio advised that she had the privilege to visit Madeira on several occasions and a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira would be awesome and beneficial to both Hawaii and Madeira.
- (4) Mr. Fred Freitas Hemmings, former State Senator, a Surfer and a Portuguese testified and expressed a very strong support of a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira in Portugal. He thanked the DBEDT staff for accepting the application and for the opportunity to testify. He also expressed his appreciation to the Committee for their favorable consideration/recommendation of Madeira’s application for a sister-state relationship with Hawaii.
- (5) Kumo Paul from Hawaii Island dialed into the meeting and testified in support of the sister-state relationship between Madeira and the State of Hawaii. He said he too is a descendant of Madeira.

At this point, Vice Chair Rolles thanked everyone that testified in support of the application for a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira in Portugal. She then asked if there were any comments or recommendations.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Ling stated that from DBEDT’s perspective, Madeira submitted a very strong application, it also shows a strong support from the governor’s side as well as community support. He indicated that DBEDT supports a sister-state relationship between Madeira and the State of Hawaii. He also indicated that since there have not been any recent activities with the Azores, a sister-state relationship between the Hawaii and Madeira could rejuvenate it and add more vibrancy between Hawaii, Madeira and the Azores.

Letters of Support:

Discussion continued as to whether Madeira submitted the necessary documentation that would convince certain committee members to recommend a sister-state relationship between Madeira and the State of Hawaii. Mr. Delos Santos-Tam as well as Mr.

Ritchie/DBEDT provided several other letters of support from various individuals, government, cultural and historic organizations included Hawaii Council on Portuguese Heritage, LUSD-American Development Foundation, Funchal (Capital of Madeira) Chamber of Commerce, the Municipal Assembly of Funchal, Secretary of Communities & External Corporation, the Regional Secretary for Tourism and Culture, Board of the Municipal Assembly, ACIF, as well as Carla Marques/Pukiki Bar, Michael P. Victorino, Mayor of Maui, Senator Stanley Chang, District 9/Honolulu, Representative Patrick, plus many others, for review and consideration.

Committee member(s) also inquired about the potential economic benefits that the people of Hawaii would receive from a sister-state relationship with Madeira. Mr. Santos-Tam noted that sugar could be one aspect also, that Andrea Codeira, an entrepreneur from Madeira is collaborating with Kuli-lana Rum on Hawaii Island and they have already lined up a production for Ukululu Rum with the William Vincent Rum Distillery. He felt that it's an opportunity to export the hard products from Hawaii to the European audiences.

At this point, Vice Chair Rolles asked if there were any committee member that would like to make a motion to accept the application presented by Madeira for a sister-state relationship with Hawaii.

Motion was made by Vice-Chair Rolles and seconded by Mr. Topenio to accept the application for further processing of a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira in Portugal.

Roll call vote was requested by Mr. Ritchie and the following committee members approved the motion: Ms. Nakama, Mr. Hannahs, Ms. Rolles, Mr. Topenio and Ms. Matsui.

Motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Ling/Ritchie indicated that DBEDT would inform the legislator that the committee has approved the recommendation for a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Madeira in Portugal.

Mr. Ritchie announced that there is a new sister-state agreement between Yamaguchi Prefecture and the State of Hawaii but, there is no signing ceremony is still pending.

REVIEW OF 2021 SISTER-STATE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATOR – (1ST DRAFT)

Mr. Ritchie advised that meeting that the first draft of the Sister-State Annual report will be distributed possibly in January 2022 for review. He then encouraged members to advise him of any comments and/or concerns.

NEXT MEETING:

TBA

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm, on a motion by Ms. Nakama and seconded by Mr. Topenio.

Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean E. Rolles
Vice Chair

Date