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HTA Welcomes Return of Direct Japan Flights to Hawai'i Island

KALAOA, HAWAII – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) today joined federal, state and county leaders in welcoming the resumption of travel from Japan to the island of Hawai'i with the return of Japan Airlines' (JAL) nonstop service between Tokyo (Narita) and Kona. JAL will operate this route with service three times a week.

During a special event held at Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport at Keāhole, HTA President and CEO John De Fries along with other tourism and government stakeholders expressed their appreciation for what Japan Airlines' service means to Hawai'i Island and the state.

"Hawai'i's history with Japan is long and unique. The strong ties between Japan and Hawai'i go back many generations, so the return of travel between our two nations is much like welcoming family home after a long absence," said De Fries. "Japan Airlines flight 770 from Narita International Airport to the Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport symbolizes the re-opening of a sky bridge that will unify us and strengthen our cross-cultural bond, while fortifying our efforts to enhance trade and commerce between our two nations."

During the first six months of 2022, visitors from Japan spent \$86.7 million in Hawai'i generating \$10 million in state tax revenue. In June 2022, four airline carriers operated routes between Japan and Honolulu, Hawai'i – Japan Airlines, All Nippon Airways, Hawaiian Airlines and ZIPAIR.

De Fries added, "International travel remains a vital component of Hawai'i's regenerative future as we gradually welcome back higher-spending travelers whose values are aligned with our mission of 'Mālama Ku'u Home' (caring for my beloved home). Today's re-launch of service complements the steady return of flights we have been seeing over the past few months from our key international source markets – Japan, Canada, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand – and those we anticipate coming back online through the end of the year."

Participating dignitaries included Hawai'i Governor David Ige and First Lady Dawn Ige, State Department of Transportation (DOT) Director Jade Butay, DOT-Airports Division Director Ross Higashi, HTA President and CEO John De Fries, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Port Director George Minamishin, and Japan Airlines Regional Manager for Hawai'i Hiroshi Kuroda.

Among the passengers arriving on JAL flight 770 was Hawai'i County Mayor Mitch Roth, leading a Hawai'i Island delegation who visited sister cities in Japan. Arriving passengers were greeted after exiting the new permanent Federal Inspection Services (FIS) facility by

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hula performances, music by Harold Kama, Jr., lei greeting by 2022 Miss Kona Coffee Kyndra Nakamoto, and the Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (IHVB) team. To support Hawai'i Island businesses and local farmers, IHVB also coordinated refreshments featuring Hawai'i Island products from Big Island Abalone, Big Island Candies, UCC Hawai'i, Pine Village Small Farm of Hōlualoa, and Waiākea water.

For information about Japan Airlines' routes and schedules, visit <https://www.jal.co.jp/jp/en/info/2020/other/flysafe/flights-service/#inter>.

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Images from August 2, 2022 Event:

<https://finnpartners.box.com/s/aeifc1706o87vcad21b8r0bfvh8jq9vh>

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Ku'u Home – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit www.hawaiitourismauthority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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