



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CITY OF TORRANCE AND CITY OF OSHU, JAPAN SIGN FRIENDSHIP CITY AGREEMENT

**Torrance, Calif., October 1, 2024** – The City of Torrance is proud to announce the official signing of a Friendship City Agreement with the City of Oshu, Iwate Prefecture, Japan. The official signing ceremony took place at Torrance City Hall, with Torrance Mayor George K. Chen and the City Council and Oshu Mayor Jun Kuranari and his delegation of 10 members in attendance. Distinguished guests, including the Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles Kenko Sone and Vice Consul General Fukiko Nakashima, as well as many corporate citizens and community partners.

Since their arrival, the Oshu delegation toured the City visiting the Real Time Response Center, Downtown Torrance, Torrance Municipal Airport, Torrance Beach, and Discover Torrance California Welcome Center at Del Amo Fashion Center. They also participated in an Economic Development meeting that included representatives from Discover Torrance, the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce, El Camino College’s Small Business Development Center, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, and the Japan External Trade Organization to discuss opportunities of mutual benefit where the City of Oshu may invest in Torrance and vice versa. In addition to agricultural products that they are interested in offering here, they produce semiconductors and are involved in energy generation such as hydroelectricity and the international linear collider.

During the rest of the week-long visit to Southern California, the Oshu delegation will visit several markets, major retailers, and manufacturers across the region to explore opportunities for importing their goods into the U.S. market. These visits will allow them to gain valuable insights into local consumer preferences and establish connections with potential business partners for future trade and commerce. Additional events include a visit to the American Honda Collection Hall, as well as a symbolic Sakura tree planting ceremony at Torrance Park, joined by representatives from Ito En, the corporate sponsor from Japan to commemorate the growing friendship between Torrance and Oshu and also underscore both Cities' shared commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

The City of Oshu brings unique attributes to the table as Torrance’s new Friendship City partner. Known for its rich history, agricultural innovation, and dedication to technology, Oshu complements Torrance's innovative spirit and economic ambitions. Oshu’s deep-rooted cultural heritage, particularly its contributions to art and education, aligns with Torrance’s goals of expanding cultural ties. Oshu is also the hometown of Los Angeles Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani and through this new friendship, Torrance hopes to continue fostering the growing demand of the Dodger Japanese fanbase who visit Los Angeles and establishing Torrance as a destination for baseball fans everywhere.

Mayor George K. Chen expressed his excitement about the agreement, stating, "This Friendship City Agreement with Oshu is a tremendous milestone for Torrance. Oshu's strong sense of tradition and innovation reflects our own community values, and together, we will cultivate new opportunities for our citizens to learn, grow, and prosper. This partnership highlights Torrance’s dedication to building global relationships that contribute to cultural, educational, athletic, and economic advancements for both Cities."

Mayor Jun Kuranari of Oshu shared his enthusiasm, saying, "We are honored to forge this friendship with the City of Torrance. Oshu is committed to fostering international connections that promote mutual understanding, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. Together, we will create new avenues for collaboration that benefit our citizens and pave the way for a brighter, shared future."

This agreement marks Torrance’s fifth Friendship City designation, following partnerships with Changhua and Tainan in Taiwan, Hwaseong in South Korea, and Bizen in Japan. Torrance continues to expand its global footprint by establishing ties with cities that share its commitment to innovation, culture, and international exchange.

To learn more about the Friendship City Program, visit the [City’s Office of Economic Development page](#). Stay updated on future events by following the City’s Instagram @CityofTorranceCA, where photos from the Friendship City Signing Ceremony with Oshu are available for viewing.

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