



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Submitted on:  
(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** County Executive Office  
**Department No.:** 012  
**Agenda Date:** January 27, 2026  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:** N/A  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Approval of a Sister County and Prefecture Cooperation Agreement between Santa Barbara County, California and Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan

DocuSigned by:  
*Mona Miyasato*  
41846F5C725B460...

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve a Sister County and Prefecture Cooperation Agreement between the County of Santa Barbara and Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan in substantially the form provided in Attachment A, and authorize the Chair of the Board to execute the agreement; and
- b) Find that the proposed action is not a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as it involves organizational and administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

**Summary Text:**

This item requests approval of a non-binding Sister County and Prefecture Cooperation Agreement establishing a framework for collaboration and exchange between Santa Barbara County and Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan, similar to a "sister cities" agreement. The Agreement promotes cooperation in areas of shared interest including economic development, agriculture and wine, tourism and cultural exchange, climate resilience, education, and public sector knowledge sharing. The Agreement formalizes a relationship to support future exchanges, delegations, and collaborations, subject to resources and laws, like typical sister-city arrangements. The recommendation is to approve the agreement in substantially the form presented, subject to minor modifications as may be required by Japanese officials.

**Discussion:**

Santa Barbara County and Yamanashi Prefecture share notable similarities, including strong agricultural economies, recognized wine industries, natural and scenic resources, and commitments to environmental stewardship, disaster preparedness and sustainable tourism. In recent years, the prefecture has expanded international engagement through cooperation agreements and exchanges with U.S. governmental and institutional partners and recently has invited the County of Santa Barbara to develop a “sister county - prefecture” relationship.

The Agreement does the following:

- Establishes a formal framework for cooperation without creating legal or financial obligations.
- Supports the County’s endeavors related to economic development, climate resilience, public health, tourism, education, and international engagement.
- Enables future collaboration through specific activities, action plans, or exchanges approved separately by the County as appropriate.

All activities under the proposed Agreement would be subject to County policies, budget appropriations, and applicable laws. The proposed Agreement is non-binding, does not commit the County to expenditures, and does not create enforceable legal obligations and is consistent with the County’s authority to engage in intergovernmental and international cooperation for governmental and administrative purposes. Either party may terminate the Agreement with 12 months’ notice.

**Background**

Yamanashi Prefecture is a prefecture in central Japan with a population of approximately 800,000 and a diverse economy anchored in agriculture, wine production, tourism, and advanced manufacturing. Home to Mount Fuji and the Fuji Five Lakes region, Yamanashi is the primary wine-growing region of the country and places a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship, sustainable tourism, and regional vitality.

County staff have worked with counterparts in Yamanashi Prefecture to develop an agreement that aligns with these precedents while remaining consistent with California county authority and governance practices. County staff have also worked closely with the Southern California Chapter of Sister Cities International (SoCal SCI), a non-profit organization, to coordinate the Agreement and communication with prefecture representatives. SoCal SCI serves as the regional network of SCI members—cities, counties, and affiliated nonprofits—facilitating coordination, informational meetings, and visits.

Santa Barbara County currently does not maintain a formal sister-county program; however, there has been growing interest in exploring potential partnerships with regions that share aligned initiatives. Other California counties have entered into similar non-binding international cooperation or sister-region agreements, approved by their Boards, focused on exchange, economic development, and shared policy interests. SoCal SCI can assist with this and provides a structured, recognized mechanism for these engagements. The City of Santa Barbara participates in the SoCal SCI Chapter and has several sister city relationships.

**Fiscal Impact**

Approval of this Agreement has no fiscal impact, but future activities or exchanges could involve costs that would require standard approval processes and budget appropriation. Membership in the Sister Cities International organization is less than \$2,000 annually and would be funded from existing appropriations used for organizational memberships.

**Special Instructions:**

Upon execution by the Yamanashi Prefecture Governor, Kotaro Nagasaki, the County Executive Office will return a fully executed copy to the Clerk of the Board for retention in the record.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Cooperation Agreement between Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan and County of Santa Barbara, California, United States of America.

**Authored by:**

Brittany Odermann, Deputy CEO

[bodermann@countyofsb.org](mailto:bodermann@countyofsb.org)