WHEREAS, pursuant to the enactment of Act 150, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006 (Act 150), the Hawaii Sister State Committee was established within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to advise the Governor and the Legislature on matters relating to sister state or province relations and relations, in general, between the State and the states or provinces of foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, a sister state relationship between Hawaii and the Riau Islands would be mutually beneficial to the United States and Indonesia and fits well with the new "US-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership" initiative designed to strengthen relations between the two countries through enhanced cooperation on energy, the environment, health, science, technology, trade and investment, in addition to other regional and global issues; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of Indonesia is the world's third largest democracy and home to the largest Muslim population in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Riau Islands Province (also known as Kepulauan Riau Province or abbreviated as KEPRI Province) is the 32nd province in the Republic of Indonesia has 2,408 islands and 1,392,918 residents with 700,000 of those residents concentrated on the main island of Batam and is the center of Malay culture and the origin of the language, Bahasa Indonesia; and

WHEREAS, Similar to Hawaii, the province enjoys a tropical climate and 96 percent of its 251,810 sq-km area is comprised of water, providing vast opportunities for shipping, fishing,
renewable energy production, marine study, ecotourism and more; and

WHEREAS, Currently, Riau Islands Province provides free education for children up to junior level (year nine), contains a number of first-rate vocational schools which it is interested in expanding and increasing; and

WHEREAS, The Riau Islands desires to upgrade and improve education from elementary to university levels and is developing plans to construct a large university system containing community colleges and junior colleges similar to Hawaii's community college system; and

WHEREAS, The Riau Islands Province has organizations from around the world participating in the preservation of ocean corals and other endangered species that reside in the province creating ample opportunity for exchanges between the Riau Islands and environmentalist organizations in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Batam, the most populated island, has water, waste disposal and other sanitation necessities, the Riau Islands are looking to bringing these resources to its outer islands and rural areas thus creating economic opportunities for Hawaii-based planners and contractors who have expertise in the area of civil engineering; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, due to its strategic location, its oil and natural gas resources and free trade zone, the province was carved out of an existing Indonesian Province (Riau) and established to promote foreign trade and encourage further development of the area; and

WHEREAS, When the sister state relationship is combined with the needs and agendas from the U.S. State Department and U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as the Export-Import Bank, World Bank and U.S. AID, Hawaii could put together pieces that would create a Hawaii-based regional center for international finance and foreign policy pointed at the Pacific-Asia region; and
WHEREAS, A sister state working relationship with the Riau Islands Province would, in turn, create sustainable jobs in areas associated with international finance that would employ economists, engineers, bankers, and other consultants helping to build commerce and could work hand-in-hand with the U.S. Pacific Command, fostering peace and stability in the region; and

WHEREAS, The Hawaii Sister State Committee met on October 16, 2009 to consider the application of the Riau Islands and unanimously approved the application after receiving testimony in support from Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Honorary Consul of Indonesia, the Indonesia-Hawaii Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Defense, Indonesian specialists from the University of Hawaii, Permias Hawaii, a 150-member Indonesian Student Association, and Senior Advisor of the Governor of Riau Islands; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that the Governor of the State of Hawaii is requested to assist Hawaii to become a more active participant in the dynamic economic and diplomatic activities in the Asia-Pacific region by authorizing the establishment of a sister state relationship between Hawaii and Riau Islands Province; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States, the Honorable Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, the Honorable Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State, the Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor of the State of Hawaii, the Honorable Ismeth Abdullah, Governor of the Riau Islands Province, Republic of Indonesia, the director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Honorary Consul of Indonesia in Hawaii, Dr. Charles Morrison, President of the East-West Center, the Indonesia-Hawaii Chamber of Commerce in Honolulu, USINDO in Washington, DC, and the American Chamber of Commerce, Jakarta, Indonesia.
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