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James strengthens Hawaii relationship

Rongelap Mayor James Matayoshi met with Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris and his chief of staff earlier this month.

The two mayors talked about ways to increase cooperation and foster a network to create and strengthen partnerships between Hawaii and Marshall Islands and specifically between the Honolulu and Rongelap local governments. Mayor Harris proposed that the friendship between Rongelap and the City of Honolulu be officially recognized.

“I’m very pleased that the representative of the City and County of Honolulu would express concern about the people and these little islands,” said Matayoshi after his meeting with the Mayor of Honolulu.

Harris’ chief of staff Abelina Madrid Shaw recently returned from the Conference of Mayors for Peace at the United Nations, where she addressed the issue of devastation and contamination to the land, health and culture of the people of the Marshall Islands resulting from the 67 nuclear tests .

Shaw’s said that “the major portion of my presentation at the United Nations to mayors of cities in the US, Europe, Asia and Japan was inspired by Mayor Matayoshi’s fine speech that he presented to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bravo nuclear test” in Majuro on March 1.

Shaw also indicated that representatives of several television and film production companies attending the mayors’ conference at the United Nations expressed interest in developing documentaries about the testing program in the Marshall Islands and the on-going efforts to rehabilitate and resettle the affected atolls.