April 1, 2015

To The Board of Regents

My name is Mehana Maka'ina'i and I stand in strong opposition to the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project and any further development on Maunakea. The development of Maunakea has always been highly protested and for very good reason: Desecration of a sacred site, development of a unique and pristine environment, endangerment of endemic species and the aquifer system. We who oppose the development of Maunakea represent all walks of life. We are cultural practitioners, farmers, environmentalists, lawyers, professors, students, scientists and concerned residents. Our public interest in protecting the mountain should no longer be superseded by private motives and large sums of money.

The University of Hawai'i claims that it supports the TMT project because “it contributes significantly to the university’s mission of advancing knowledge.” This so called knowledge is based on being able to “see much fainter and more distant objects” and “to study them in greater detail.” I find it ironic that the university is so determined to obtain knowledge light-years away when the reality of Maunakea and its significance to Hawai'i is within our reach and immediate responsibility. You don’t need a telescope to see the outcry from the community against this development.

We are fed up with the continued development of our mountain. Each new telescope built claims to offers more to science while taking up more room and resources. When will enough be enough? Now! I am positive that the TMT technology will be obsolete soon after construction is complete and then plans for the newer and bigger TTTMT will be on its way. Decommission of these telescopes is a broken promise. We need to stop the development now so that Maunakea can be preserved and so that our children do not need to pick up this battle.

If the Board of Regents and the University of Hawai'i truly “understands that Maunakea is one of the most culturally significant sites in Hawai'i” then it should use that knowledge to make the decision to put an end to the TMT construction. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to understand that that is the best decision for Hawai'i.

No Maunakea
Mehana Maka'ina'i