Dear BOR members,

I write in support of the astronomical activities on Maunakea.

Astronomy is an ancient science, practiced by all people including Polynesian voyagers and Native Hawaiians. It is become an international endeavor of great public interest that addresses some of the most fundamental questions regarding our origins and destiny. Because of its location on a tall, gently sloped mountain in the middle of the Pacific, Maunakea has excellent atmospheric qualities that make it the premier site for astronomical observations in the northern hemisphere. This is the fundamental reason for the construction of 13 telescopes on the mountain and their continued development.

In my view, I believe that the science preserve has been managed very well in recent years in a way that balances public access with scientific observations, meets or exceeds all legal environmental requirements, and pays careful attention to its role as a sacred place in Hawaiian culture. The observatory’s very existence will forever be a point of contention for some members of the community but I believe that its role in education, the economy, and its visibility as an internationally recognized place for discovery, is supported by the majority of people in Hawaii and on the Big Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Williams