Hello, I am a student at UH-Hilo studying astronomy as well as a contract software developer that has run a business in Hawaii for over seven years. I would like to submit the below as my testimony in support of TMT:

When we discover life outside our solar system we will answer one of the biggest questions that has faced all thinking humans and cultures since antiquity and it will have a profound and permanent impact on everyone on the planet Earth. For the first time in humanity we are within a decade or two of answering this question.

TMT will answer this question.

Like it is unique to the protesters, Mauna Kea is absolutely and 100% unique for astronomers. There is no other place on Earth. You cannot make a logical argument that it can be placed somewhere else and achieve the same results.

Further, the mountain is not sacred to a race of people. It is sacred to a number of people of a certain race and it's important that we respect that belief, but not at the expense of the rest of humanity, especially when it can be done so in accordance with the law.

When I think of the houses and strip malls that now cover the mountain that I grew up on I am certainly saddened as well. Unfortunately, there is no sense in denying that all of the Earth is changing as our population grows. Yes, we would all like to hold on to those pristine and former memories of what we had, but the reality is that is not possible.

Does that mean we should willy-nilly build McDonald's wherever we want? No. Is TMT a McDonald's that we are willy-nilly building just for giggles or to make someone money? No, it is not. It is a remarkable scientific achievement that will have a profound impact on all humanity, including all religions and spiritualities.

I believe there are valid reasons to protest but I think TMT is an incredible asset to all the people of Hawaii, to the economy of our entire county and state, to the importance of science and the USA's ability to be a leader in the world, and, ultimately, to all humans currently alive and all humans yet to be born. Literally tens of billions of people will be impacted by the discoveries TMT makes.

Thank you,

- Wilfred T Gee