I would like to start off first by saying, ‘A‘ole TMT!

I strongly believe the Thirty Meter Telescope should not be built on Mauna Kea, and feel it is our job, as Hawaiians, to protect our ‘āina because it gives us life. It is what feeds and nurtures us, and it has done so for millennia. The ‘āina is a precious, but limited resource that requires continual care. This is why I feel it is necessary to speak on its behalf, because if we don’t step up and take care of our land, who will?

Mauna Kea is zoned as conservation land for obvious reasons, such as it being sacred land to the Hawaiian people, as well as a critical habitat for some endangered species. However, its role in the conservation of water, is what I feel will be extremely damaging if the Thirty Meter Telescope is to be built atop Mauna Kea. We all know that Mauna Kea is one of the main sources that feed our aquifers. The construction of TMT will deposit many sources of harmful contaminants into the mountain, which will then contaminate the aquifers. Therefore, contaminants will spread everywhere, and to everyone. Is the desecration of sacred land; the loss of endangered species; and the well being of ourselves, our keiki, and generations to come; the price we need to pay for science? For mere curiosity?

The astronomy world has been anticipating the building of the Thirty Meter Telescope, hoping that it will unlock the secrets of the cosmos. However, the Hawaiian people do not need to look any deeper into space, because our ancestors have already taught us what the stars have to offer. Our kupuna have used the very same stars to navigate through thousands of miles of open ocean long before compasses, GPS, and modern day technology existed. Our ancestors were skilled in astronomy and navigation, and we are gracious to what the stars, and the heavens have given us. This is the beautiful thing about the Hawaiian people, we take only what we need! We never take more then we need, especially at the expense of our ‘āina.

People often wonder why the Hawaiian people are so concerned, and passionate about the land? The answer is quite simple. Our relationship to the land is familial and reciprocal. We mālama the ‘āina, and the ‘āina will mālama us… and this, THIS is the reason so many of us Kānaka Maoli have come together in opposition to the building of TMT. We will not back down, we will never give up, and we will continue to fight for what is PONO! We are Mauna Kea!!

Kūʻē!!!Mahalo,
Kanani Rivera
Aloha.