I am writing this testimony because I firmly believe that the University of Hawai‘i should withdraw their sublease for, “The 2000 Master Plan” or “TMT”, upon sacred Mauna A Wākea.

First, I would like to discuss the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was “approved” by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) for this particular project. There are many statements within the EIS that acknowledge the possible environmental dangers to the mountain and surrounding areas. For example it states, “There is a potential for accidents, including fire and the accidental release of hazardous materials or solid waste, including trash and construction materials.” This statement taken directly out of the EIS is alarming to me and should be alarming to you, because religious, cultural, environmental, and if nothing else Hawaii people could be in danger from a potential “less than significant accident.” As large as this project will be and the 7 years it will take to construct, there is sure to be unknown accidents throughout, even with all the “said” necessary precautions. For instance, the impacts from the initial dynamite blast that will blow Mauna Kea’s Northern Plateau into dust, and will send rocks and sediments launching into preservation sites, historical sites, cultural sites, and even kill off indigenous species that are already endangered. On Monday night on the 6:00 p.m. KHON2 news, Gunther Hasinger, Institute for Astronomy Director, a supporter of the “TMT” project, said they were not going to use dynamite to excavate for foundation, but yet in the same “TMT” project in Chile, they did exactly that (Environmental Impact Statement, “TMT” on Cerro Armazones). Hasinger also explains they will do grading to excavate, but I’m not sure how that alone will dig 2 stories deep, like proposed plans have indicated.

Furthermore, as it also states in the EIS, the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for UH managed areas, “its goal is for these two cultures to coexist in such a way that is mutually respectful and yet honors the unique cultural and resources of Mauna Kea”. Obviously, there are extreme opposition to this entire construction by the Hawaiian people and its culture, so their goal is already being challenged. Why is it that they say they want to coexist with the culture, yet everything they have proposed thus far, has directly infringed upon our cultural practices. A common example is that they are building on the most sacred peak of Hawai‘i, which breaks ritual of even allowing people to this area for a prolonged period. I would expect that all of you are aware of every culture aspect of this Mauna, so I will finish by stating, I am here to protect the ‘Aina and I will continue to help every aspect of it, and I sure would hope your intentions would concur.

In conclusion, there are agreements being made with the TMT Board Members and Hawai‘i State Agencies that balance on a fine line between right and wrong. There are many instances where I found the EIS to have very controversial deals when discussing the environment and cultural aspects of this project. The more the State continues to ignore the people’s stance and legal
rights, the more illegitimacy will come forward and therefore lead to more distrust with the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for your time, and efforts to hear the community out once again.

Whitney Rubio