Written Testimony regarding University of Hawai‘i at Hilo: The Management of Mauna Kea and the Mauna Kea Science Reserve

Kihei Seto <kiheiseto@gmail.com>
To: bor@hawaii.edu

April 15, 2015

University of Hawai‘i
Board of Regents
Bachman 209
2444 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

To the members of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i, ke aloha nui i ā ‘oukou pākahi a pau,

My name is Nicole Seto. I was born and raised in Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawai‘i. I am an alumna of the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, having received two bachelor’s degrees, one in Business Administration and another in Hawaiian Language. I also served as a fiscal officer for RCUH RAPD for 2 years and subsequently served as the fiscal officer for Ka Haka ‘Ulana O Ke‘elikōlani for a year. I currently work in broadcasting. The University of Hawai‘i is an excellent educational and research institution.

I respect each of you and recognize that for some of you, the management of Mauna Kea and the Mauna Kea Science Reserve is something that you had little or no control over but have inherited the awesome responsibility of making decisions regarding it today. I believe here is where you and I can find common ground. UH involvement on Mauna Kea stretches far beyond my birth, yet I have the awesome responsibility to make decisions on how I will act today.

"Insanity: doing something over and over again expecting different results." Albert Einstein

Hawaiians and local people alike have not benefited from the university's activities on Mauna Kea and are not interested in the pacifying THINK fund. If it is true that UH does not benefit monetarily either, why continue to be the entity that shoulders the responsibility of managing Mauna Kea accountably? Why continue to be the buffer between the State and the community? Has the Institute for Astronomy operated in a way that shows accountability to all stakeholders? How many local prospective students has the Institute for Astronomy accepted into its program since its inception and especially in recent years?

As Board of Regents, it is your responsibility to make the most appropriate decision for all stakeholders of the University. The Institute for Astronomy, the Office of Mauna Kea Management, the Astronomy and Physics Departments are but a small percentage of the obvious stakeholders. Today, I ask you to think of the less obvious stakeholders, the Marine Science students for example. How will their living laboratories be effected by the construction of TMT? Or those in the Humanities. How can they trust in the education of a university that allows such inhumane activities to continue?

As one whose ancestry and connection to this place stretches beyond oral history, it is my responsibility to make the most appropriate decision for my stakeholders. For me, the least obvious is you, the Board of Regents, and the University of Hawai‘i. I am an educated Hawaiian because I had the opportunity to attend UH-Hilo. I am able to
provide for my family because I am educated. I do what I love everyday because I am educated in that field. I want you to continue to be in our community and to be loved by our community.

And so I ask that we stop operating in a spirit of insanity. We have the opportunity today to change what we have inherited. Let's do something different. Let's try for a different result.

I oppose the desecration of sacred sites. Please do what you must to nullify all contracts related to desecrating sacred sites and refuse further responsibility of the management of Mauna Kea.

Me ke aloha mau,
na Nicole Seto