Testimony in regards to Management of Mauna Kea and Mauna Kea science reserve

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To: bor@hawaii.edu  

Aloha Board of Regents,

I am Hawaiian, born and raised in Hilo, and I support the Thirty Meter Telescope project. Imua TMT!

1. This project will assist our keiki in higher learning and being able to gain better employment, which in turn will raise the economic level of our people. Healthcare issues, socio-economic standing and education all go hand in hand.

2. This project will bring positive focus to our island as new discoveries are made in our universe that benefit the whole of humanity. As a Hawaiian I am proud of my ancestry which includes fearless navigators, astronomers and visionaries. I see no disconnect between the sacredness of our Mauna and the sacredness of studying and exploring our universe. In fact, I see a deeper connection and a continuation of that sacredness through astronomy atop our Mauna.

I would also like to comment on the current protests. Those protesting do not represent all Hawaiians or all residents of this island or this state. There are many people who support the TMT who are intimidated by those who are shouting so loudly and have vast organized social media networks. For example using celebrity Jason Momoa and his fan base to stir up more support worldwide for which many of the protestors don't know what they are protesting about! And that is just one example of many! In addition, many students here in physics and astronomy simply do not have the time nor the emotional energy to counteract all that is happening because they are busy trying to get their work completed successfully in very challenging subjects, and all that during the quickly approaching end of semester. There are also many other Hawaiians and other residents who do not participate in social media, who are very supportive of the TMT project and are trusting that construction will go forward as approved and planned, and see no reason to become involved.

This protest has gotten carried away because of the social media bandwagon mentality, and I feel that the TMT is really not the issue itself. I think many of us know there is a deeper wound here. Many broken hearts at the injustices that have been done in the past. But until individuals take responsibility for their own hurt, their own ancestral pain and forgive what has happened, it's hard to see clearly and move forward.

Mahalo for your time,

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