To the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i and the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs:

I. IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED

I respectfully urge you to immediately STOP ALL telescope construction activities at the Mauna Kea Conservation District. I urge you to STOP all arrests for those who stand peacefully to protect Mauna Kea.

If construction proceeds, I will suffer an injury based on my strong religious and cultural relationship to this sacred site. Mauna Kea is sacred because it is connected to the creation of Native Hawaiians. It is the meeting place of Papa, Earth Mother and Wākea, Sky Father, who are the parents of the entire human race and the birthplace of humanity, where heaven and earth meet. The cultural significance of this site contains thousands of years of history that supports the well-being of Native Hawaiians and this state.

I urge the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to support the protection of Mauna Kea. I ask OHA Trustees to stop further desecration of this site and to urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to uphold its high fiduciary duty to protect the Public Land Trust in favor of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, considering the strong spiritual and religious relationship Native Hawaiians have to Mauna Kea.

I ask you to support efforts to void the Conservation District Use Permit (CDUP HA-3568) and Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Sublease issued by the BLNR/UH for the TMT, and any related permits allowing construction to proceed. These permits violate the Public Trust, the Hawai‘i State Constitution and state regulatory laws.

There are several ongoing legal appeals regarding this project; one of the cases is now before the Intermediate Court of Appeals. While Governor Ige recently requested a time extension to delay the project, the TMT International Observatory LLC will move forward with construction once the extension has ended. Two other appeals pertaining to the TMT Sublease are still pending in the Third Circuit Court. Construction must STOP to allow these cases to be properly adjudicated and for the public to be properly heard.

To date, over 43,000 people have signed a petition urging Governor Ige to stop the construction of TMT. The State arrested thirty-one individuals as well. More individuals have volunteered to be arrested to protect this sacred site.

Thousands statewide, both Native Hawaiians and the general public, oppose the TMT by protesting in their own communities. Many more have committed to begin protests should an adverse decision be made to continue construction.

This issue requires immediate action. I respectfully ask you TO STOP THE FURTHER desecration of Mauna Kea immediately.
When the ancestors crossed the vast open expanses of Kanaloa for the first time – over a hundred generations ago – Mauna ā Wākea’s impact was immediately felt. In ‘ōlelo makuahine, the kupuna say pūlamalama; the beacon, the torch. That was Mauna ā Wākea hānau ‘ia akū ī Papa – the mountain raising like a beacon of hope out of the horizon for the stalwart sailors. Such a sight immediately made the mauna a sacred symbol of both cherished hope and new beginnings and also of connections and remembrance of the past. In that spirit, the mokupuni now known as Hawai‘i was given the name Lononuiākea – the herald of Wākea; the great ancestor and progenitor.

With deep roots extending back to Kahiki, the ancestors used their knowledge to adapt themselves to the ‘āina that supported them. This knowledge and belief is the kapu – the many kapu – that sustained the ancestors and facilitates a deep connection and balance with all aspects of the natural world; balance with nature, each other, and within one’s self. The sacred kapu – so heavily exaggerated, distorted, and berated by historians – provides a means to connect to the most sacred and important force of all, the very cycle of life. Supported by such a system, the ancestors built the foundation for this culture. The unseen, the spiritual forces, felt so deeply by the ancestors, instigated in them the deepest of spiritual connections, undefinable under the terms of man’s religions. The akua, through which these connections are made, are not confined or limited to the definitions of “god”, they are entirely cosmic, infinitely beyond what man can comprehend. Through the kapu, relationships are pursued and established, and through these relationships, understanding is attained. It was this harmony and balance that created and maintained complete sustainability for the ancestors, persisting over a millennium.

The deep understanding developed is rooted in connections made with the ‘āina, on a basis of balance and harmony. To the practitioner, these aspects are crucial to the function of the Hawaiian culture. All lands – from the kuahiwi and the kualono to the kekaha and the kahakai – are sacred in this connection. Connections provide the understanding of how to use the lands; how to deal with the sacrifices made and how to balance the decisions made. Understanding is not gained through wanton sacrifice and destruction but through close observation and immersion into these forces.

Mauna ā Wākea is one such connection. It is the hub for many to reach back to their ancestors, and a beacon to inspire hope and progress for the future generations. Ka piko e kū i ke ao; ka piko e kū i ka lani uliuli. The knowledge of our ancestors speaks to the value of sustainable practices and acknowledgement of the effects each action has on the entirety of the environment – both in ecological and sociological terms. Through this knowledge, the best practices for both sustainability and advancement can be implemented.

In a world so radically influenced by the draw of material wealth, technology, and excessive self-gratification, these traditional standards are limitless in value. Mauna ā Wākea is the example we can set. Just like the ancestors saw hope in its form towering out above the Pacific as they crossed seemingly endless seas, so is Mauna ā Wākea a beacon of hope for our generations as we advance to yet another age in time. Let Mauna ā Wākea be that foundation, that source, and that light.

We are Mauna ā Wākea.

Conall Kahaka’ioikamālie Ravenscraft

Ōnouli, Kealakekua, Kapalilua

Kākau ‘ia ma ka pō Kāloapau ma ka mahina ‘o Welo i ka makahiki 2015