April 16, 2015

Board of Regents
University of Hawaii

Dear Regents,

Thank you for scheduling this special hearing. I have attended many, many hearings on this subject. I am Mary Begier, a concerned citizen. I love Mauna Kea. I think of her as Pele's home. I mean no one any disrespect. It is how I interact with her.

I became aware of a rather relaxed way of following the lease obligations on UH’s part while attending public hearings several years ago. I have asked my fellow citizens, community members and neighbors to join me in paying attention to the care of our island. Leadership at the University may change but we who live here have an obligation to know what is going on around us and actively participate in making sure that obligations such as the UH Hilo lease for Mauna Kea are upheld.

Before the Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM) was created as the primary agency responsible for the University of Hawaii (UH) management areas on Maunakea, the mountain was neglected. With the adoption of the UH Master Plan in 2000, our business community stood up with the university to reaffirm our commitment to better malama Maunakea.

Protection of Mauna Kea’s unique cultural and natural resources— including the four sub-plans addressing public access, natural resources, cultural resources and the decommissioning of telescopes—were realized through implementation of the Comprehensive Management Plan and are being successfully managed by OMKM.

One example on which I am submitting supportive testimony today is that OMKM has actively engaged a wide-base of volunteers to help care for our mountain. In 2014 alone, nearly 300 community members traveled up Maunakea and gave approximately 2,000 hours of volunteer time at 9 weed pull events. I personally participated in several of these weed pulls. It was with great pride and care we planted the silverswords.

In 2013, The Hawaii Invasive Species Council presented myself and The Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce with the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HiISC) Community Hero Award during the first annual Hawaii Invasive Species Council Award ceremony at the State Capitol Auditorium. The Community Hero Award recognized a community member or community based group that has been a shining example of dedication to prevent or manage invasive species. What an honor to know that our commitment to better take care of the mountain was notable.
Community involvement and the implementation of many successful programs is helping to achieve harmony, balance and trust and providing greater access to education, research and astronomy.

I will continue to stand with the University of Hawaii and OMKM knowing we are holding up our promise to be ever improving stewards of our mountain, Maunakea.

With Sincere Aloha,

Mary Begier, Realtor®
Referral & Relocation Certified / 1998 Aloha Aina Realtors Choice Award
Certified Residential Specialist / Certified Residential Broker
2001 Realtor® of the Year Hawaii Assoc. of Realtors®
2001 Realtor® of the Year Hawaii Island Board of Realtors®
2002 Realtor® of the Year Honolulu Board of Realtors®
2003 President Honolulu Board of Realtors®
2006-2013 Hawaii Island Commissioner Hawaii State Foundation on Culture & the Arts
2007 President Hawaii Island Board of Realtors®
2008-09 President Rotary Club of Hilo Bay
2009-2010 President Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce
2010-2011 Chair Hawaii State Foundation on Culture & the Art
2013 Community Hero Award from Hawaii Invasive Species Council
2015 Athena Award Recipient