Aloha Members of the Board of Regents,

I humbly beseech you as a University of Hawai‘i student, please listen to the various issues and concerns being shared with you in regards to the management of Maunakea. We all come in support of our sacred Mauna, for our education, our environment, our culture, our families etc. so before you make a final decision please think about the students and the impact which any decision you make regarding the management on Maunakea will do, the impact it will have on the future of Hawai‘i, on the land and our resources, think about your families, and your loved ones. In 2010 when you first approved the building of the TMT this was posted on the UH system website: “While the capital investment and jobs created by the project will boost the state’s economy and provide for local educational and workforce development programs. I know that the university’s important responsibility of ensuring good stewardship of this special site for future generations has been of utmost priority throughout the process, and it will continue to be our focus as we work closely with the community and all stakeholders involved with the management of Mauna Kea.” Do you truly intend to accomplish all of these goals, what about the previous telescopes, what was the purpose for those telescopes? Don’t tell me those were all just experiments! Why can’t those other telescopes be modified or repaired? You already have 13 working telescopes, why not upgrade those or fix the broken ones? You already had that many chances to try to improve our economy, to support student learning. Which as a student I find very offensive, not once have I been able to go there due to no service to get me there, if these telescopes are supposedly for the students, why is it not accessible to the students.

Secondly, the UH system boasts that n Native Hawaiian culture, Mauna Kea is a focal point of spiritual and cultural significance, a home of deities like Poli‘ahu, a place of spiritual connection with our ancestors, the history situated in that area, and the heavens. Is building a Thirty meter
telescope really going to conserve, protect, and preserve this unique resource?

This 1.4 billion thirty meter telescope is planned to become operational in 2024, so how exactly would this start to help us, we would have to wait 9 years in order to even receive its benefits. The funding could be used for other means, why not put this much effort and money into creating more scholarships? Why not create better programs for students? Hire more staff to fix the housing on the uh campuses so that are ceiling aren’t chipping, or our sinks don’t always break down and overflow, or our carpets aren’t remnants of the 80’s? Why not create better programs so that our students can graduate faster and find jobs after graduating? Why not create more community based programs so that our community can be more involved in the educational institution for the future of Hawai’i?

If you looked at the geography of Maunakea then you already know this is a dormant volcano, meaning if it erupted; all of the telescopes would be wiped out, what then? Are you still going to say its benefiting the students?

The University of Hawai’i mission statement states and I quote: “At all levels in the academy, students and teachers engage in the mastery and discovery of knowledge to advance the values and goals of a democratic society and ensure the survival of present and future generations with improvement in the quality of life.” Can you make a promise and written document stating that the quality of life will not be jeopardized, that the land and resources there will be untouched, as a democratic society many of us are voicing our concerns and unrest in building this gigantic telescope. Many of our own students are protesting, some of our professors and many of our community members are protesting too, people all over the world are supporting this movement as well, why are we still trying to build it? Is this due to funding? Can you promise that after the telescopes are worn out and out of date, or after the lease runs out that everything constructed you will take everything off of Maunakea and restore the mountain completely as it was before all of the construction?

And lastly I conclude with this which was also stated: “The University ensures active support for the participation of Native Hawaiians at the University and supports vigorous programs of study and support
for the Hawaiian language, history and culture.” Since Mauankea is a part of the Hawaiian culture and history why are you still wanting to build anything on top of Maunakea? Knowing how sacred and crucial this place is in our Hawaiian culture.

Let me leave you with something to ponder, “Do you value astronomy more than the words of your own students? More than the Native Hawaiian culture?”

Sincerely,

Puamokihana