My Testimony Against the TMT Project

Cherie Griffore <cheriechunli@gmail.com> Thu, Apr 16, 2015 at 3:01 AM
To: bor@hawaii.edu, robertl@oha.org, colettem@oha.org, petera@oha.org, reynoldf@oha.org, rowenaa@oha.org, crayna@oha.org, hulul@oha.org, dana@oha.org, leia@oha.org

My name is Cherie Griffore and I want to thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns. This hearing is on a Friday so there are a lot of people who could not be here, but the support for the Mauna Kea and The Protectors multiplies everyday. There is so much going on right its almost overwhelming so I made a list. There are 6 main reasons I am against TMT and building more telescopes on Mauna Kea: The Water Source, The Environment, The Sacreds, The Culture, The Hawaiian Nation, and the Keiki.

1. The Water Source  Mauna Kea is the main aquifer for the Big Island, supplies most of Hilo's water. Youre gonna allow a 5,000 gallon storage tank for the 150-250 cubic feet of hazardous waste from the telescope? The melting snow and precipitation flow down our Mauna into the streams into our ocean. On Big Island we live off the land and the tourism industry: Fresh Island Fish, Big Island Grass Fed Beef, Kona Coffee, even the International Billfish Tournament and Ironman to name a few. How will we hunt, fish, and farm if our waters are contaminated? Our waters are so clear, how will we relax and cleanse in our rivers and ocean if there's a bunch of chemicals?

2. The Environment  TMT claimed there was no machinery at the summit, The Mauna Kea Protectors saw a tractor that is leaking oil. Lying and contaminating already? I think this is an indication of the future problems this project would have, and once again we are Protectors not protestors. I bought stuff at the Visitor Center a few months ago. I asked for a bag and they said "were a conservation area." so you don't give out plastic bags but you allow 9 broken huge telescopes? Practice what you preach. You could have removed a few of those and used those foundations, and left the undisturbed land alone. But each telescope has a lease and means more to the 14 Billion you've already profited, and you pay a $1 a year lease. Does that seem fair?

3. The Sacreds  Mauna Kea is the top of every ahupua'a, the part that is reserved for the Gods. Where people's ancestors were buried, The highest mountain in all of Polynesia, the closest to God. You can see Poliahu showing herself. Snowing for 3 weeks straight so you couldnt start construction. Snowing for 3 hours after the day of the arrests, many saying she was showing her appreciation. Lake Waiau was in a drought and now the reflecting pool is filling up, started filling up after The Protecters had a ceremony at the Lake. They say this is where the Gods can see their reflection, and they are happy. There have been tons of Pueos which is a blessing, telling each of us that we are exactly where were supposed to be Protecting and taking a stand for our Mauna.

4. The Culture  One of the main reasons people come to Hawai'i is for our culture. I am not Hawaiian but I was lucky enough to be born and raised here, and I am a UH Hilo Alumni. In the past 2 weeks on the mountain I have learned so much about the Hawaiian Culture, most impressive is Kapu Aloha. There is total respect and understanding for The Protectors and their cause and for law enforcement having to do their job to feed their families. This is one of the most intense nonviolent "protest" and the outcome will be huge. We are seeing the resurgence of the Hawaiian Culture and it is beautiful, the chanting, the singing in unison, the hulas, the ceremonies-amazing.

5. The Hawaiian Nation  And the most intriguing component in this whole process is the Illegal Prolonged Occupation of Hawaii. Our Queen did not sign a treaty of cession, there for we were not annexed- we were occupied. If you are occupied you can not be annexed, its one or the other. The laws of occupation required the US to end its occupation of Hawaii when the Spanish-American War ended. Monday on the Mauna there was a workshop about our Hawaiian Flag. When our Queen was imprisoned in her own Palace each island looked to a different country for help-Kauai looked to Russia, Maui picked France, and Hawaii Island's King Kamehameha wanted the biggest baddest Army to help us so he chose the British. Kamehameha conquered all the islands so thats why we use our flag, the one with the Union Jack. I'm loving all the history and culture we are all learning and experiencing. This is a pivotal point in Hawaii and we are lucky enough to see it in our lifetime, and even luckier to be a part of it.

6. The Keiki  the main reason a lot of people are taking a stand, the future generations. The involvement and total
interest of the kids on and off the Mauna has been refreshing and inspiring. Off the iphones with their hands in the dirt connecting to the earth learning the songs and hearing the stories...and teaching us along the way. This $1.4 Billion dollar project is looking into space, what are you looking for? The only place I want to be is Planet Earth and its high time we start taking care of it.

The flyer we hand out to people at the Visitor Center states that "40 years ago the people of Hawai’i agreed to share our highest most sacred summit with a small community of UH Astronmers- on the promise of protection and stewardship of fragile alpine habits, endemic native species, and sacred cultural landscapes. Sadly your promise to Malama (or care for) our sacred summit remains unfulfilled." You have signs posted saying "Mauna Kea is historically, culturally, and environmentally significant. Help preserve our culture and natural landscape and show your respect by not hiking beyond this point to the summit". And theres 3 huge telescopes right behind the sign, and you are gonna allow machines to dig 2 stories deep into the mountain? how is that copacetic? The Mauna is already telling you no: there was a construction truck that over turned, right after we came down from the summit after the arrest Lilinoe came and blanketed us with a thick fog too think for construction, then it snowed...in April! Usually the snow last a few days and its gone, there has been snow now for over a month. You see you dont need a telescope to tell you about the universe, all you have to do is look around you.

Thank your for your time