The use of Mauna Kea for telescopes has been a problem that has erupted many times over the years as it seems to be a convenient rallying point for some groups to gain publicity and supporters. While there may be some valid arguments to some of the points raised the simple fact is that these groups have agreed to the use of Mauna Kea in the past, but now apparently wish to reopen the issue once more. Some reports suggest this is merely a tactic to increase the ground rent paid for the site, if so, then this has nothing to do with cultural sensitivity at all, but is merely a negotiating strategy. I do not know if those reports are true, but I do note that the demands are not to remove all the current telescopes, which one would assume would be the case if the issue of cultural sensitivity were the real reason. Mauna Kea is one of the best sites in the world for housing such telescopes and the value of this to Hawaii comes in many forms. The economic value can be calculated in terms of work for local businesses and the jobs that will be created. There is also the catalytic effect this has on the University's Institute for Astronomy, which is among the best in the US. But the greatest value of these installations is hard to quantify as it will be, in my opinion, the inspiration that our young people in Hawaii will gain when they read about the achievements that come from these facilities that are at the cutting edge of world-class science and yet are situated in their back yard. Inspiring the students of Hawaii to become fully engaged in cutting edge science is a major reason to have a State University that can attract world-class researchers and Faculty, the telescopes on Mauna Kea are a very important part of this mission.

Sincerely,

Chris Measures
Professor of Oceanography, UH Manoa.