Dear Board of Regents:

This letter is for your special meeting, Sunday, April 26, 2015, at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Performing Arts Center, 200 W. Kawili St., Hilo, HI 96720. A copy is also attached.

I start with a question:
What are your responsibilities; to listen to the petition of the masses, or provide the best education possible for the people of Hawaii?

I have been reading the local letters to the editor recently, to further understand the TMT protesters. If you give in to them, I think you should rename the University of Hawaii system, THE STONE AGE UNIVERSITY, or THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HAWAIIAN RELIGION UNIVERSITY.

Below are some passages that seem to represent the protesters, and if you give in to them, the implication is that you endorse what they say:

TMT will “destroy our ecosystem.”
“Dismantle the other 13 telescopes; they too mar the summit of Mauna Kea, and all for the pleasure of looking out to space.”
“Dismantle all the telescopes atop Mauna Kea and remove the structures completely.”
“A $1.4 billion investment? User fees alone will amount to hundreds of millions per year. To study the beginning of time? Ludicrous!”
“Personally, I'm relying on this island to take care of me and my children long after money no longer has any value, because people will FINALLY realize the importance of natural resources. The construction of such a massive project would change our island forever, disrupting the water supply, producing tons of waste, and destroying the habitat of unique, endemic plants and animals.”
“Profits will be made by the manufacturing and labor of the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope – profits that will go to governments and corporations, not to locals and Native Hawaiians. This is money making in the name of science. I think it’s ironic that scientists want to learn more about the universe at the expense of native cultures that have always understood more about the universe than these scientists will ever learn by looking through a telescope. If you do not understand the concept of “aloha 'aina,” then you will never be able to understand the universe in the way it is meant to be understood.”
“What will this project do to our watershed? What will chemical spills and human waste generated at the summit do to our aquifer?”
“Climatic conditions are connected to human consciousness – further drilling into our planet’s Crown Chakra would be disastrous.”

Some of the above statements may make good sound bites, but they do not make much factual sense; many are just incorrect.

Do you want the University of Hawaii to support statements saying the TMT: “will destroy our ecosystem.”, or “Dismantle the other 13 telescopes; they too mar the summit of Mauna Kea, and all for the pleasure of looking out to space.”, or To study the beginning of time? Ludicrous!", or any of the other quotes above? And, of course, there are many more quotes that have been made, and not listed.

And while you are listening to protesters, I suggest you ask them some questions:
How do you know Mauna Kea is sacred? What makes it sacred? What other places are sacred? Why?

Since the ancient Hawaiians were so into astronomy, maybe they declared Mauna Kea to be sacred, so that it could be preserved for astronomy? How do you know this interpretation is not true?

If you believe Mauna Kea is sacred, what other Hawaiian legends/beliefs do you believe in? Why some and not others? How do you choose?

Now no TMT, next remove the existing telescopes. What is next? Remove the observatories from Kilauea (Volcano Observatory), from Mauna Loa?, from Haleakala? And then?: teach the Hawaiian Origin story in the schools instead of/in addition to, The Big Bang/Evolution?

Is your ultimate goal the reestablishment of the Hawaiian Monarchy? If so, who gets to be King, how do you choose? Do they have the same powers of the ancient kings? If not, why not?

I have family that have graduated from the University of Hawaii. I hope they don’t become the laughing stock of land grant universities.

Some protesters have said it is not religion vs science. But we know it is. It is one thing to teach about the religion, history, etc. of a people. It is quite another to base your educational policies on their religion.

Is the Board of Regents for education, and the advancement of knowledge? Now is the time to say, Yes or No.

Sincerely,

Mark Goldman
1396 Kinoole St.
Hilo, HI 96720

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19K
University of Hawaii
Board of Regents
Bachman 209
2444 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

April 24, 2015

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