July 19th, 2019

Governor David Y. Ige
415 S Beretania St
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

Aloha e Governor Ige,

The University of Hawai‘i Student Caucus (UHSC) is the representative body of the students of the University of Hawai‘i System as chartered by the Board of Regents. The UHSC is formally authorized to serve as a system wide association of all University of Hawai‘i (UH) campus student governments, representing approximately 51,000 students. The UHSC holds the UH system accountable to their first and foremost priority of being an indigenous serving institution. As stated in the mission statement of the system and individual campuses, it is our utmost responsibility to construct and provide the support needed by the indigenous people and culture of Hawai‘i.

The State of Hawai‘i, UH system, and Board of Regents must be held accountable to their responsibility to their constituents within the UH system and the communities in which they serve. Although we are in support of an advanced and challenging learning environment for our students, it cannot be at the cost of our first priority to serve and advocate for the needs of our students. Having served on the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH), we expect you to understand the importance of advocating for the best interest of students per the students expressions.

Since the announcement of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) being built on Mauna Kea, there has been continuous demonstrations from an extensive majority of our constituents demanding the cessation of the TMT. Constituents present in demonstrations include UH faculty, staff, and students as well as community members, conservationist, and educational institutions outside of the UH system. Demonstrations have been done throughout the state as well as nationally and internationally by a wide population inclusive of many different indigenous cultures. For years, the TMT has caused numerous negative impacts on our constituents and communities. Although we recognize your need to balance the input from multiple entities and constituents, the vast majority has expressed their opposition to the TMT being built on Mauna Kea.

We demand you renounce your emergency proclamation and retract the unnecessary excessive amount of law enforcement set to engage on Mauna Kea. We demand that you hold yourself accountable to your responsibility to the people of Hawai‘i, by withdrawing the state of Hawai‘i affiliation with the TMT. The abundance of evidence is clear, the immense majority of our constituents that we serve oppose the TMT and it is not ever to be constructed on Mauna Kea. As our Governor, you are responsible to abide by the best interest of our constituents and take the assertion of our constituency to stop the desecration of Mauna Kea and Hawai‘i. We must honor and support the preservation and advancement of the culture, land, and people of Hawai‘i nei.

E kūpa‘a ma ke aloha i ka ‘āina,

Christielove Espinosa
Chairperson, University of Hawai‘i Student Caucus