April 25, 2015

University of Hawai'i Board of Regents,

I am a Native Hawaiian scientist who was born and raised in Hawai'i. I received my education from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. As a scientist I actively participate in both research and education which is driven by my strong interest in my culture, science, and my community.

There are many issues related to the development of Mauna Kea and the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) that I feel should be considered equally rather than over looked for the excuse of economic development and scientific advancement. Land title, jurisdiction, culture, conservation, and ethics are other issues that need to be equally addressed. As a Native Hawaiian scientist I feel the overall scope of TMT has not truly demonstrated a process that will lead to responsible science because of these overlooked issues.

It is obvious that Mauna Kea represents immense cultural significance. However, many people have difficulties viewing Mauna Kea from a cultural perspective. As a Native Hawaiian scientist I appreciate Mauna Kea as a valuable resource. The processes that resulted in Mauna Kea developing from the ocean floor to becoming the highest peak in the Pacific Ocean required time that can only be considered on a geological time frame. The intricate connections of many natural systems that developed over time with Mauna Kea are also measured on a larger time frame. These time frames are far greater than those of which we base many of our advancements. However, decisions we make in our lifetime often have implications that span far beyond several lifetimes with goals that remain relatively short sighted. Decisions impacting an entire community should rightfully include the entire community. Especially true when consequences span generations not yet able to voice their concerns. Kaho'olawe, although a military example, serves as a reminder of how decisions made by a few can result in implications that span far beyond culture to include unresolved biological and environmental consequences. More importantly, in relation to the time scale discussed, technology that quickly outdates itself should seek less invasive approaches when considering a resource that will not naturally be replaced in our lifetime. Space based telescope may offer a less harmful alternative, while possibly providing both the potential for a greater advancement in science and a better example of how to move forward with the acceptance of an entire community.

As a Native Hawaiian scientist I wish to understand the natural world with minimal impact to the natural world I study, while maintaining a positive relationship to my community like my ancestors had. Hawai'i represents a wealth of scientific and cultural knowledge when looking toward Earth and as a biologist I wish to preserve as much of this for myself and future generations of scientist also seeking responsible science. Responsible science should only seek to move an entire community forward rather than sacrifice the community they claim to help. I believe the overall scope of TMT has not truly demonstrated a process that will lead to responsible science and I hope to see the UH Board of Regents withdraw their support for this project.

Mahalo nui,

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