



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee  
and  
Senate Higher Education Committee  
March 23, 2009 at 3:45pm  
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SCR 73/SR 44

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO CONVENE MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS STEWARDSHIP ISSUES AND AFFIRM THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VARIED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY INTERESTED IN MAUNA KEA AND ITS UNIQUE SPIRITUAL, CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

Chairs Hee and Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

These resolutions request that the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the University of Hawaii (University) convene meetings with stakeholders to address and affirm issues with the varied members of the community interested in Mauna Kea. We are respectful of the spirit of this resolution but want to note that we have already started to do what is being requested in these resolutions.

Under the University approved Mauna Kea Science Reserve Master Plan (2000) (Master Plan), the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UH Hilo), through the Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM), has managed the lands that the University is leasing from the DLNR on Mauna Kea. The mission of OMKM is to achieve harmony, balance, and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement programs that protect, preserve, and enhance the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of Mauna Kea, while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research, and astronomy.

OMKM operates with close assistance of the community-based, all volunteer Mauna Kea Management Board (MKMB), whose seven members are currently drawn from groups such as the DLNR, the Native Hawaiian community, the observatories, and other community interests. To fully understand and appreciate the community-based arrangement and sensitivity of OMKM and the MKMB, it is notable that they are both advised by the Kahu Ku Mauna Council—"the guardians of the mountain". Members of Kahu Ku Mauna are selected on the basis of their awareness of traditional and

customary use of Mauna Kea and their sensitivity to the sacredness of Mauna Kea. Serving on this Board are cultural practitioners, a Polynesian navigator, representatives of the Native Hawaiian enrichment coordination program, an instructor in Native Hawaiian cultural programs, and an expert in Hawaiian Language. OMKM is also advised by an Environmental Committee on natural resources. All meetings of the MKMB are publicly noticed and open to the public. These meetings are attended by stakeholders from groups interested in the varied aspects of Mauna Kea and clearly have an opportunity to exchange ideas and have their concerns addressed. Stewardship issues are addressed at these meetings.

Recently, the UH Hilo through OMKM has agreed in concept to enter into a cooperative agreement formalizing the mutually supportive relationship between OMKM and the Natural Area Reserve Commission, which is under DLNR authority. The University through OMKM will reciprocate by assisting DLNR to protect the resources in the Natural Area Reserve.

Since the establishment of OMKM, there has been significant progress in the stewardship of Mauna Kea's cultural and natural resources.

Moreover, with the preparation and submission of a comprehensive management plan (CMP) to the DLNR and the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the University is prepared to take the next step in the management of Mauna Kea's cultural and natural resources. In preparing the CMP, the University consulted extensively with all parts of the Big Island community, including the Native Hawaiian community. As the CMP is intended to be an evolving document, to be updated and modified as new, better, and more current information becomes available, the University will continue to consult with the Big Island community in relation to the CMP and other related Mauna Kea management matters.

In summary, we are respectful of the spirit of this resolution but want to note that we are already doing what is being requested in these resolutions.

Thank you kindly for allowing us this opportunity to share our comments. Aloha.