

To the University of California and University of Hawai‘i:

The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) International Observatory identifies the University of California (UC) as one of its “full member” partners in the construction of the TMT, which will be just the latest telescope built on the sacred summit of Mauna a Wākea, otherwise known as Mauna Kea. As a federal environmental impact statement by NASA on the Keck Outrigger telescopes has noted, "future activities on the summit of Mauna Kea would continue the substantial adverse impact on cultural resources" (NASA Keck Outrigger EIS, 2005, page 4-73). In addition to desecrating sacred land of great cultural significance, the TMT clearly breaks state law in its violation of conservation district criteria and represents a large threat to surrounding communities given that it will produce toxic and chemical waste. Thus we, the undersigned, write with a sense of urgency to demand that the UC divest from the construction of the TMT.

The development of the TMT is the latest iteration of a settler colonial project of development and exploitation on Mauna Kea. The first general use permit to build a telescope on Mauna Kea was granted to the University of Hawai‘i in 1968, and the first telescope was built in 1970. In 1983, the Mauna Kea Complex Development Plan was approved by the Hawai‘i State government, and, from 1983 to 2002, thirteen more telescopes were installed. Kānaka Maoli, the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i, were not consulted in this long and gradual process of developing Mauna Kea. In 2010, the TMT was proposed, and in 2015 construction was slated to begin, thereby prompting resistance on Mauna Kea which led to 23 arrests of kia‘i (protectors) on April 2, 2015. In response to continued assaults on life, land, and sovereignty on both Mauna Kea and Haleakalā, Kānaka Maoli continue to put their bodies on the line against development and desecration. The number of Kānaka Maoli and allies arrested has grown to 91 at the time of this writing. The continued criminalization of Kānaka Maoli and the development of Mauna Kea and other sacred summits, lands stolen from the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in an 1893 overthrow and 1898 annexation, cannot be removed from a genealogy of violence against Kānaka Maoli and the dispossession of their lands. United States Public Law 103-150, also known as the Apology

Resolution and signed by President Bill Clinton in 1993, recognizes the violence done to Kānaka Maoli, who never relinquished their lands or sovereignty.

The State of Hawai‘i’s administrative rules on conservation districts clearly states that "proposed land use will not cause substantial adverse impact to existing natural resources within the surrounding area, community or region" (HAR 13-5-30(c)(4)). However, given that the TMT permit application includes tanks for wastewater, the capacity of which is in the thousands of gallons, and requires the transport of chemical waste up and down the mountain, the likelihood of spills that will endanger both the natural resources of the mountain as well as the greater community is high. Further, in acknowledging only four sites of impact, the TMT and state of Hawai'i denies the indisputable fact that there are hundreds of historic and traditional cultural sites that exist on the Mauna (Mauna Kea Comprehensive Management Plan, Figure 5-1: "Historic Sites, Find Spots and Traditional Cultural Properties in the UH Management Area"). It is inexcusable that the University of Hawai‘i has submitted an application for the Conservation District Use Permit on behalf of the TMT when construction so clearly violates the state’s administrative rules, especially since the University of Hawai‘i is also the designated manager of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve. This conflict of interest cannot be ignored and it goes without saying that science is not above the law. For these reasons, the TMT cannot be built on Mauna Kea.

As the descendants of Ko Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina (the Hawaiian Islands), Kānaka Maoli are connected by Mauna Kea to the ‘āina (land). Mauna Kea is a wao akua (realm of gods) and is sacred to Kānaka Maoli. Thus, akua (gods) and mo‘o (guardian spirits) are living residents of the Mauna, residents whose voices resound through the kia‘i standing at the front lines. And although Henry Yang of the TMT International Observatory Board of Governors has argued that the TMT would serve as a “good steward on the mountain [that is] inclusive of the Hawaiian community [and does its] part to contribute to its future through our ongoing support of education and Hawaii Islands’ young people,” it is clear that the TMT does not value “inclusivity” when its construction forecloses the inclusion of a Hawaiian worldview that

respects Mauna Kea as a sacred place, a worldview that is key to growing a generation of Kānaka Maoli who are prepared to answer questions of self-determination and decolonization. Moreover, incarcerating Kanaka Maoli youth and those in their communities for defending Mauna Kea stands in stark contrast to the TMT's alleged goal of honoring Hawai'i Island's culture and young people. Neither the TMT nor the UC system can honor Hawaiian culture while destroying the very land upon which Kānaka Maoli descend from, desecrating their akua, and arresting them for protecting sacred ancestral lands.

We, as members of the UC community, refuse to be made complicit in these crimes through the UC system's participation and financial investment in this violence against Kānaka Maoli on Mauna Kea. As a multi-campus institution that sits on the stolen lands of the Kumeyaay (UC San Diego), Tongva (UC Los Angeles, UC Irvine), Cahuilla (UC Riverside), Patwin (UC Davis), Yokuts (UC Merced), Amah Mutsun, and Ohlone (UC Santa Cruz, UCSF, and UC Berkeley) peoples, the UC system by virtue of its existence is already implicated in violence against Indigenous peoples. The impact of this settler colonial violence is only amplified by the fact that there remains only a 0.5% Native American undergraduate population as of Fall 2018 in the UC. The UC cannot, in its chosen ignorance to Indigenous peoples of both California and Hawai'i, claim to be an inclusive, diverse, or safe place of learning nor can it claim to be an acceptable environment for Indigenous students. Divesting from the TMT is the first step that the UC system must take to create a campus climate and community that addresses these continued settler colonial violences. We therefore urge the UC system, particularly its scientific community, to divest and discontinue its participation in the construction of the TMT and the production of knowledge at the expense of Indigenous lands and peoples.

ke aloha 'āina,

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