

Written Direct Testimony of Kehaulani Kauanui

Welina kakou - greetings all:

My name is Dr. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, and I am an Associate Professor of Anthropology and American Studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, the author of *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*, and the sole producer and host of a public affairs radio program, "Indigenous Politics: From Native New England and Beyond," which is syndicated on nine radio stations that air throughout ten US-states.

In the context of the TMT proposal, the State's Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands' (OCCL) representative correctly observed at the February 25, 2011 BLNR hearing, the "[i]nterpretation of the spiritual impact is based upon individual perception." It has been the individual interpretation of spiritual impacts of UH and the DLNR that have allowed telescope development on Mauna Kea to have proliferated far beyond the originally anticipated level of the 1968 general sublease to UH - "an observatory" or even the thirteen telescopes anticipated by the 1983 Master Plan. I speak not only as an individual, but with a breadth of scholarly knowledge about the context of the TMT proposal within the histories, culture, and politics of the struggles of Hawaiians and other indigenous peoples worldwide against colonial dispossession.

UH's contention, "[t]here is a place on the mountain for astronomy to continue and to flourish" is accurate. But, the place for the TMT is not on Mauna Kea. Neither our early navigational practices nor King Kalāukaua's interest in astronomy should be misconstrued to render the construction of the TMT on Mauna Kea a "Hawaiian tradition." The Applicant cannot presume that imposing an eighteen story high, nine football field area wide-building onto sacred lands was in the mind of our past monarch or our legacy of navigators. Assertions to the contrary serve a deliberate, opportunistic perversion of history and continue the colonial miseducation of the public. What Hawaiian was ever *against* astronomy? Hawaiians are not against astronomy; most like me categorically oppose desecration.

As we - Kanaka Maoli Scholars Against Desecration - stated in our 2009 testimony against transferring Mauna Kea to UH management authorities,

these sacred summits will not tolerate more telescope development. This is a state law. Hawai'i Revised Statute 711-1107 on Desecration specifically states that no one may commit the offense of desecrating "a place of worship or burial," and the statute defines "desecrate" as "defacing, damaging, polluting, or otherwise physically mistreating in a way that the defendant knows will outrage the sensibilities of persons likely to observe or discover the defendant's action." Educating TMT visitors and personnel about our outrage will not mitigate these ongoing forms of desecration to an "insignificant" level.

The OCCL's finding that the "affect" of the TMT's impact on "ancient and contemporary values and resources at Mauna Kea" is not significant is absolutely wrong. The telescopes are a constant reminder of the State's willing degradation of Hawaiian culture, religion, and therefore, the well-being of the Hawaiian people. They are a legacy of a continuing process of colonization that fractures communities who live in Hawai'i. As the 1993 Apology Resolution correctly recognizes, "the health and well-being of the Native Hawaiian people is intrinsically tied to their deep feelings and attachment to the land[.]" (Joint Resolution, U.S. Public Law 203-150). The existence of an eighteen-story structure that takes up the area of nine football fields in Wao Akua, the home of our gods, our 'Aumakua (ancestral beings), and the place of the conception of the Hawaiian people by Papa and Wakea is the most atrocious violation of our attachment to the entire archipelago.

Telescope development, and the economic benefits it entails, comes at a cost to the cultural and religious heritage and practices of the Hawaiian people. By claiming that the economic benefits of a project that is anathema to Hawaiian religion, culture, and well-being outweigh its adverse impacts, the Applicant discriminates in favor of a "public" that is specifically defined to not include Hawaiian religious practitioners.

The TMT project proposes yet another violation of the state of Hawai'i's trust responsibilities to the Hawaiian people. The State's Board of Land and Natural Resources is entrusted to manage the "public lands" constituted in part by Mauna Kea and to fulfill constitutional and statutory obligations to Hawaiians. Furnishing items to remind TMT visitors and personnel of the cultural importance of Mauna Kea deeply misunderstands that importance, and will most likely misunderstand those items as well. Nor will allotting a UH-selected group of

Hawaiian cultural experts to identify four days of "minimized" TMT activity reconcile the disrespect that has accumulated over the entire history of UH and DLNR management of Mauna Kea lands. The proposed mitigation measures only serve to trivialize Hawaiian conceptions of Mauna Kea and undermine the political claims we Hawaiians have to that land. To authorize the construction of yet another telescope on the very thin basis that one more is a "minor contribution" to a cumulatively adverse impact would constitute a further breach of that trust.

J. Kehaulani Kauanui, Ph.D.