

For Immediate Release

As the State of Hawaii [builds up](#) for extensive arrests of Hawaiian kia'i, or Protectors, who are expected to oppose construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Hawai'i's tallest mountain, Mauna Kea, its defenders are bringing the mountain to TMT. Leaders of the movement to protect Mauna Kea, along with California allies, are in the Bay Area this week meeting with TMT funders, delivering letters, holding inter-indigenous events, and generally putting pressure on the organizations and individuals involved with the project. Their central messages: "Divest from Destruction", "Science: Respect Indigenous Peoples," and "Stop TMT."

The proposed Thirty Meter Telescope has been embattled since it was first proposed in 2009. Hawaiian cultural practitioners immediately opposed the project, which involves an 185-foot (18 story) high, 2 story deep structure within the "[ring of shrines](#)" cultural practice zone on a mountain that many say is the very [origin of their genealogy](#). The conflict came to a head in 2015, when a planned TMT "groundbreaking" was interrupted by kia'i (cultural protectors), who were joined by hundreds of thousands in worldwide vigils over the next few months, boosted by efforts such as [Jason Momoa's "We Are Mauna Kea" campaign](#), and a [petition with over 66,000 signatures](#). Three years of procedural battle later, the State of Hawai'i is planning an enormous response, far beyond the [2015 arrests that failed to stop massive protests](#) or let construction proceed. Earlier this month, the State Attorney General [requested \\$2.5 million](#) from the legislature for the specific purpose of enforcement against "civil disobedience", presumably related to TMT. "They don't want another fiasco where officers are shedding tears and embracing protesters," according to a government source quoted in an October Honolulu Star Advertiser [article](#), "They want this to be like Haleakala, where they were all over 'em." This latter reference was to enforcement on Maui, where [native Hawaiians were thrown to the ground and physically dragged](#) in a nighttime raid.

Events are planned for Palo Alto, UC Berkeley, and UC Santa Cruz, where TMT funders are based. "A lot of people are asking what we are going to do," says Mauna Kea Hui spokesperson Kealoha Pisciotta, who is part of all three events, along with Kumu Hula Pua Case, and many California supporters. "We are going to hold them accountable, and we are going to ask their people not to let them build this telescope. That's what we are going to do. Technology needs to harmonize with the Earth and indigenous protection, and help to get humanity out of the mess we are in, not to make it worse."

A cultural vigil, including Hawaiian hula halau and California Native American leaders, is planned for Palo Alto, where leaders of the Mauna Kea Hui are meeting with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, [a central funder of TMT](#). The assembly's message goes beyond TMT. "It is time for science to evolve," says organizer Laulani Teale. "Scientists are smart people, and we are asking them to do better than to destroy ancient sites and fragile ecosystems."

Pisciotta has also had a long history of communication with the Foundation. "11 years ago, we sent Mr. Moore a plea to refrain from building on Mauna Kea. He sent his people to do a Risk Assessment, which concluded that there are too many legal tripwires involved. We are here today to compel Mr. Moore's foundation to think bigger, to align with indigenous people and to protect the Earth, rather than destroy it, and to help prevent sanctioned violence against the peaceful kia'i (land protectors)."

Those legal tripwires have not been resolved by the [2018 decision](#) by the Hawaii Supreme Court that validated the 2017 Conservation District Use Permit granted by the State of Hawaii. The most serious among these is the University of Hawai'i's Master lease, which expires in 2033, and is [expected to be challenged](#) in addition to a [current legal attack](#) by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, possibly ending the "Science Management Area" that the TMT's proposed site is a part of. If UH loses its lease, the TMT [could be ordered to be removed immediately](#) -- if it is built at all. "If they keep pushing this, we could seriously end up with a half-built monstrosity that never sees a single star," Pisciotta said. "With all of the damage and human rights violations involved, that's beyond wasteful." To complicate matters further, DLNR's recent [briefing](#) of the Hawai'i Senate confirmed that the project lacks funds for decommissioning. Questions have been raised about this and several other issues, such as TMT's biweekly plan to [truck out approximately 7 tons each of raw sewage and toxic mirror wash](#), for which there is no existing processing facility on Hawaii Island, lack of required bonding, and the lack of required consultations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for federally designated historic areas.

Kumu Hula Pua Case, a cultural leader in the protection of Mauna Kea, also visited the Foundation in 2011 with a group of California native leaders and a hand-delivered letter from her family. "Your Foundation is in a pivotal position to contribute to positive outcomes for humanity and our Mother Earth," the letter said. "We commend your contributions to projects such as the nursing initiative and school along with your environmental conservation efforts. Unlike these and other projects supported and/or funded by your Foundation, the TMT project will have a highly negative impact with long

lasting repercussions...In the desire to discover the potential for life in other parts of this universe, some have forgotten the sacredness for all aspects of life on this planet.”

On Thursday, the Mauna Kea Hui is also hand-delivering its letter, along with a petition containing over 66,000 signatures and a [letter signed by UC students](#), to UC Berkeley CFO Nathan Brostrom, also treasurer for TMT, with a pan-indigenous vigil, procession, rally and discussion to follow. They are also delivering a warning. “Mr. Brostrom’s job is to get money for the University, which is honorable,” says Teale. “But some of that money is going to this project, which involves very serious damage to the mountain and terrible human rights abuses against those trying to protect it. That is not okay. So we are asking these Universities to pull their funding out of this plan, or we will need to personally ask that their individual donors pull their funding from these Universities. In this critical moment, peace requires a strong voice.”

According to Teale, the group is prepared to do whatever it takes. They are formally requesting lists of University donors, and are planning similar campaigns around every TMT partner, which California supporters are being trained to continue as long as it takes. “We support science,” she says, “but science that destroys ancient cultural practices and harms fragile places needs to be put to rest. It is a choice.”

On Friday, there is a discussion and prayer vigil at UC Santa Cruz, where the Associate Director of TMT is on faculty. “It is not a protest,” says Teale, “it is a conversation and a call to science to harmonize with protection.” There will also be a prayer at the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building, and music by Hawai‘i songwriter Liko Martin, who is also known as a kupuna (respected elder) of the Hawaiian movement.

Case, who spent time at Standing Rock and many other indigenous gatherings, has been building a worldwide base of support, including indigenous leaders who stand with the kia‘i this week. “Mahalo to all of our relatives friends and supporters who are assembling to stand with Mauna Kea in the Bay Area and those who are sending their prayers, chants, songs and messages from Hawaii and all around the world,” she says, “We have come today to say that for many of us there is no other way, from around the world we are protectors, count them, we stand with Mauna Kea, sacred mountain.”

Pisciotta, meanwhile, continues to lead the Mauna Kea Hui in what she calls “moving aloha” for the healing of the Earth and humanity. “This is really about raising the standard of aloha,” she says. “We are here to bring that aloha to the world, for the healing that everyone needs.”

Wednesday 1/30/19 meeting and vigil, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Palo Alto
Thursday 1/31/19 9:30 AM letter delivery, Office of the President, 1153 Franklin St., Oakland.
10:30 AM University of California at Berkeley: Gather at Hearst Mining Circle; cultural protocol at Campanile, 11:15, with procession to follow. 11:45 AM Rally at Sproul Path; 2 PM discussion at Multicultural Community Center.
Friday 2/1/19 University of California at Santa Cruz: Teach-In discussion, music, and cultural sharing 2:30 PM at the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building, Room 221

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See Also: protectmaunakea.rocks
[Facebook.com/protectmaunakea](https://www.facebook.com/protectmaunakea)

References:

EIS

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/occl/files/2013/08/2010-05-08-HA-FEIS-Thirty-Meter-Telescope-Vol1.pdf>

UC Student letter

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ff77e_036a10a8c6b94d01ad4fd9e384d3bfb7.pdf

Enforcement Gearing Up

<https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2019/01/25/hawaii-news/gearing-up-for-tmt-state-says-county-will-take-the-lead-regarding-anticipated-protests/>

TMT @ moore.org

<https://www.moore.org/initiative-strategy-detail?initiativeId=thirty-meter-telescope>

HSC Wilson Opinion

<http://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SCWC-13-0003065diswilson.pdf>

Sublease Conditions

<http://hawaii.edu/offices/bor/regular/materials/20140220/Item%208.%20%20Approval%20of%20Sublease%20and%20Non-Exclusive%20Easement%20Agreement%20with%20TMT%20International%20Observatory.%20LLC.pdf>

Petition (66,000)

<https://www.change.org/p/governor-david-y-ige-stop-tmt-construction-and-arrests-of-mauna-kea-protectors>

OHA Lawsuit

<https://www.oha.org/news/oha-files-lawsuit-state-mismanagement-mauna-kea/>

Jason Momoa “We Are Mauna Kea”

<https://www.popsugar.com/celebrity/Jason-Momoa-We-Mauna-Kea-Social-Media-Campaign-37246809>

Enforcement - plans for brutality

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2018/10/31/hawaii-news/chin-leads-state-planning-to-address-any-protests/>

TMT @ Legislature

<http://www.bigislandvideonews.com/2019/01/05/video-tmt-creeps-into-state-capitol-conversations/>

Haleakala Arrests

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8pwd2yhmsI>

Exceptions to HSC Decision

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/mk/files/2016/10/B.01f-Final-Pet.-Comb.-exceptions-to-HO-FOF-COL.pdf>

