

Dear CASCA members,

As you likely know, since July 17 the restart of TMT construction in Hawaii has been halted by protestors, and their messages have been effectively distributed through the media and social networks. No construction equipment has been able to go up the mountain. In addition, existing telescopes have not been able to operate since the start of the protests, as safe access to them cannot be guaranteed. We are in largely uncharted territory and no one knows how it will play out.

What is happening in Hawai'i now has gone well beyond TMT into deep and complex issues that are primarily Hawaiian, though they have an international resonance. There are many Hawaiians, including many among the indigenous population, that support the telescope. It is our very strong view that it is primarily up to Hawai'i to decide how - or if - they will "share the Mauna", as eloquently [expressed](#) by Hawaiian master navigator Kalepa Babayan. We do not aim to influence or interfere with the negotiations that are taking place, but wait to learn if the Project will be welcomed to join the community on Hawai'i island.

For a brief history of how we got to this point, we refer you to the [report](#) CATAC prepared for the LRP2020 process. The TMT site on Maunakea was determined in the 2000 [Master Plan for the Maunakea Science Reserve](#) after extensive consultation with indigenous leaders in Hawai'i; the location below the summit is not optimal for astronomy, but was chosen to avoid culturally sensitive areas on the mountain and to minimize visibility from other locations on the island (see [this link](#) for more information). In the intervening years, the project has undergone extensive consultation, work to satisfy [environmental concerns](#) and requirements, and has obtained the [required legal permits and approvals](#) to construct. In addition, the Project has worked to engage the local community, through initiatives like the Hawaii Island New Knowledge (THINK) fund and significant investment in the [Workforce Pipeline Program](#). The THINK fund in particular has had an impact on tens of thousands of Hawaiian residents; [this report](#) to the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources gives an overview of how effective it has been. The Project will also pay a substantial rent, 80% of which will go to the Office of Maunakea Management for stewardship activities. A lot of good information about all this and more is available at <https://www.maunakeaandtmt.org/>.

At the moment, there is effectively an indefinite moratorium on construction. It is important to note that all interactions with protestors have been respectful and without violence, and the issuance of an emergency proclamation on July 17 (subsequently withdrawn on July 31) did nothing to change that. We would never condone the use of excessive force to gain access to the site, and we are confident that no one involved sees this as a viable solution. The only path to TMT construction in Hawai'i is through negotiation, and the only activities going on now are talking, discussing and negotiating. We find nothing to object to regarding the behaviour of the TMT Project or its partners and supporters, in their response to the current protests.

Astronomy on Maunakea has a long and largely positive history with Hawai'i and its residents. This is nicely summarized in the Astro2020 [white paper](#) written by CFHT Director Doug Simons, which also demonstrates that there is a path for astronomy to be fully embraced and welcomed on Maunakea for many more years to come. We do acknowledge that there have been historical issues with the management of Maunakea; some of these were addressed in the 2000 Master Plan, and others are being [addressed now](#) in response to Governor Ige's 10 point plan. We deeply regret that the current protests have disrupted operations at the other Maunakea observatories and, moreover, that they have created rifts between members of our communities. We very much hope that a negotiated solution in the short term will see those observatories reopen, while discussions within the Hawaiian community proceed on how the TMT project can move forward on Maunakea.

Access to a thirty-metre class telescope has been a priority for Canadian optical astronomy for over 20 years, as evidenced through our long range planning exercise. TMT will be a transformational facility, enabling exciting discoveries for generations to come (the [Detailed Science Case](#) gives a good overview of the breadth of science TMT will impact). Many scientists, engineers, industrial partners, politicians and administrators have devoted years of

effort to making TMT on Maunakea a reality. A further delay is not desirable, but is a small price to pay for the decades of discovery and edification that we will gain, in partnership with our Hawaiian hosts. For as long as there remains a realistic possibility to peacefully negotiate a route for this to happen, and to do so in a way that means the project is broadly welcomed and viable in Hawai'i, we recommend continuing with this course of action.

Many of you will have questions, seek more information, or want to voice your support or objections to this statement. This note is to let you know that we want to hear from you. If we cannot answer your questions, we will redirect you to someone who can. Please send your questions and comments to mbalogh@uwaterloo.ca and thacker@ap.smu.ca.

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