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MAUNAKEA STEWARDSHIP AND OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY (MKSOA)

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Telephone (808) 272-0259

Website: <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/maunakea-authority/>

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 12, 2025

10:00 am

Online via ZOOM and livestreamed via YouTube

Meeting Recording Available at

<https://youtube.com/live/u-ykVNye2Uc>

AUTHORITY MEMBERS

PRESENT, Zoom: Chairperson John Komeiji; Second Vice-Chair Rich Matsuda; Paul Horner; Bonnie Irwin; Neil Hannahs; Kimo Alameda; Ryan K.P. Kanaka'ole; Ben Kudo; Lanakila Mangauil;

EXCUSED Members: Kalehua Krug; Pomai Bertelmann; First Vice-Chair Noe Noe Wong-Wilson;

MKSOA SUPPORT: Pua'ena Ahn, Executive Assistant, Board Secretary (MKSOA); John De Fries, Executive Director (MKSOA); Lloyd Unebasami, Interim Administrative Services Officer (MKSOA); Bill Stormont, Project Director (MKSOA); Linda Chow, Deputy Attorney General (AG)

GUESTS: Greg Chun, Executive Director (CMS); Mike Miyahira, Regent (UH BOR); Bill Brillhante, Managing Director (Hawai'i County)

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME PROTOCOL

Chair Komeiji called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. Opening remarks by 2nd Vice-Chair (VC) Matsuda.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comment.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 8, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

MOTION: Motion by Member Hannahs to approve meeting minutes

from May 8, 2025 10:00 am Regular Board Meeting.
Second by 2nd VC Matsuda.

ACTION: The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. CHAIR REPORT – Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items

No Report, Remarks by Chair Komeiji.

V. GOVERNANCE– Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items

VI. ADMINISTRATION – Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items

A. Report by Executive Director (ED) De Fries:

1. Update on Interim and Permanent Offices
 - a. Interim Office- Work in progress: Mahalo to ED Chun and CMS for temporary space, lease process ongoing, currently under review pending Deputy AG approval. Move-out from ‘Imiloa in progress.
2. Community Talk-Story Session in Kona, Date June 26, 2025, 5PM-7PM, Location TBA: June 26 date cancelled, facility use approval for Kealakehe High School cafeteria did not come in time. Preferred alternative date 7/17/25. Off-island Board members, please stay overnight so as to avoid having to rush out after event.

Question by Member Hannahs.

B. Status of Long Term Transition Working Group (TWG)- Member Kudo:

1. TWG May Meeting: Substantial progress being made, will begin review of 4th (last) tranche of documents as of July meeting. Review should be done by September. Conservation District Use Permit opinion by Deputy AG pending. Draft Master Transition Report expected to be completed by October, will implement transfer pending approval by UH Board of Regents and MKSOA Board. Asset transfer will hopefully be completed by late 2026-early 2027. Recommending MKSOA be prepared with sufficient staff by then.

Clarification by Chair Komeiji.

- C. President’s FY26 Federal Budget Request- Summary of Impact to Mauna Kea Observatories, Report by Member Matsuda: Context, Federal Budget process, specific cuts to existing observatories, NSF statements on TMT. Caveat- difficult to speak on impacts to other observatories’ operations beyond Keck. NASA, National Science Foundation (NSF), Smithsonian are primary funders of Mauna Kea astronomy. Budget calls for overall 24% cut to NASA budget, including 66% to Astrophysics Division, 32% to Planetary Science Division, NSF 57% overall cut, Smithsonian 12% cut. Maunakea Shared Services (MKSS) are heavily dependent on funding contributions from observatories. Longer term, it is important for

MKSOA to determine carrying capacity, astronomy footprint and sustainable funding model. Funding cuts will have long term budget implications, devastating impacts on education, research, and the profession overall. Some of the approximately 600 astronomy-related on-island jobs, and workforce development and community service programs at risk. President's Budget Request is only a proposal. Reminder that nothing is final until appropriations bills are passed in floor votes in congress. Of 10 facilities on Mauna Kea, over half are at least 50% funded federally, including those operated by UH. NSF budget report says Gemini telescopes will operate at 50% capacity. Keck will lose \$5 million, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory funding cut by 25%, unsure how Submillimeter Array will be affected. Infrared Telescope Facility will remain fully funded by NASA (asteroid detection). Very Long Baseline Array budget not reduced in NSF budget request (GPS). CMS stewardship funding will be affected, especially Research Training Revolving Fund. NSF will delay holding Section 106 consultations for TMT, Giant Magellan Telescope will enter Final Design Phase but not TMT. TMT's official response is on their website.

Questions and comments from Members Alameda and Hannahs, clarification by 2nd VC Matsuda, Chair Komeiji and CMS ED Chun.

ITEM TAKEN OUT OF ORDER

- D. Update on Consulting Services to Develop a Management Plan for the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority: Announcement of selected offeror to be made on Monday. Board to be notified, and will eventually be asked to meet with planning contactors to frame priorities. Time is of the essence and portions of UH plans will be retained if they are deemed acceptable.

VII. FINANCE– Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items

ITEM TAKEN OUT OF ORDER

- A. Report by Interim Administrative Services Officer Unebasami- May Financial report including appropriations, budget, expenditures, balance: Details contained within attached document available at <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Item-VII-MKSOA-June-2025-Meeting-Financial-Report.pdf>

VIII. CENTER FOR MAUNAKEA STEWARDSHIP (CMS)– Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items

ITEMS TAKEN OUT OF ORDER

- A. Operational Update- Report by CMS ED Chun:
 - 1. DLNR Land Division Permit Review: OCCL has required Land Div. to approve project proposals, met new Land Div. Administrator and Hawai'i Island Manager, some clarification received that they will want to review projects that require an outside agencies' permit (building, health, CDUP etc.). Clarification and consideration needed for implications for MKSOA
- B. Joint Management Committee (JMC)- CMS, MKSOA
 - 1. Integration of University of Hawai'i Comprehensive Management Plan 2022 Supplement, Maunakea Master Plan and

Administrative Rules (with an expiration date of “no later than June 30, 2028”): Staff Recommendation is for Board to allow MKSOA to continue to operate at the JMC level under the current existing UH plans and administrative rules with the understanding that these plans and rules essentially expire with the 5-year transition period, rather than formally adopting them for the time being, as the current JMC arrangement already includes any UH projects of moderate and major impact being brought to MKSOA Board for review and approval.

2. Proposed Federal Funding Reductions: Biggest issue is not knowing how cuts will affect individual observatories, but from CMS perspective, there have already been significant impacts to UH research and UH system-wide policy changes and budgetary scrutiny. Meetings with MKO Directors and Oversight Committee regarding MKSS budget upcoming. Uncertainty around TMT’s ability to pay its rent due to loss of NSF funding. CTO fees if approved by UHBOR will supplement budget by approx \$600k, but unsure how that will interact with potential loss of RTRF funds. Impacts to Hawai‘i astronomy in general far greater than just TMT, which has received the majority of media attention. Details contained within attached document available at <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Item-VIII-B-2-CMS-ED-Report-6-12-25-Fed-Budget.pdf>

Questions and comments by Members Mangauil, Alameda, Hannahs and Chair Komeiji, clarification by Member Irwin, Project Director Stormont, and CMS ED Chun.

3. Exploring Co-Funding opportunities Between CMS and MKSOA: Potential scenarios discussed where MKSOA contracts with CMS prior to Federal budget cut issues arising, but matter to be discussed further in order to minimize impacts to CMS operations and individual staff over the course of transition. Too many interdependent components to fully anticipate effects.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS


- A. NEXT AUTHORITY MEETING- JULY 10, 2025, 10:00AM-12:00PM, DOFAW-HILO, 19 E. KAWILI ST
- B. NEXT COMMUNITY TALK STORY SESSION IN KONA, DATE AND LOCATION TBA

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion to adjourn by Member Hannahs, Second by Member Kanaka‘ole.

ACTION: Unanimous by Show of Hands.

Meeting adjourned at 11:54 pm.

Approved  8/14/25
MKSOA Board Secretary