

Letter of Support for TMT
(From a Commissioner of the Windward Planning Commission)

Date: September 5, 2025

To: Governor Josh Green
MKSOA Chair John Komeiji
Executive Director John De Fries
MKSOA Members
University of Hawai'i President Wendy Hensel
Vice President Vassilis Syrmos
UH-Hilo Chancellor Bonnie Irwin
Mayor Kimo Alameda

Subject: Urgent Support for the Thirty Meter Telescope on Maunakea

Aloha Governor Green, Chair Komeiji, Executive Director De Fries, esteemed MKSOA Members, UH Leadership, and Mayor Alameda,

As a Commissioner serving on the Windward Planning Commission, I have the privilege and responsibility to help guide decisions that shape the future of our islands. Today, I write in strong support of securing the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Maunakea in a way that honors Native Hawaiian culture, safeguards our environment, and creates lasting opportunities for our residents.

TMT represents not just a scientific project, but a bridge between world-class research and Hawai'i's unique cultural, educational, and economic needs. Over the past several years, TMT's leadership has demonstrated a willingness to address past divisions, work respectfully with Native Hawaiian and rural communities, and co-create locally driven solutions.

The tangible contributions TMT has already made over \$6 million in site sublease fees and another \$6 million toward community benefit programs including the THINK Fund for scholarships and STEAM education demonstrate a commitment to reinvesting in our keiki and our future workforce, even without access to the site since 2019.

We must acknowledge an urgent reality: without TMT, our state's astronomy sector faces decline. This would mean the loss of high-quality local jobs, an end to significant investments, and the erosion of Hawai'i's place as a global leader in astronomy. Competing sites in Chile and Spain are actively working to secure the project, and decisions are being made now.

As a Commissioner, I believe the right path forward is for Hawai'i to embrace TMT through a model of kuleana, a shared responsibility where the project and our state work together to:

- Actively respect and integrate Native Hawaiian cultural protocols
- Protect and restore the unique environment of Maunakea
- Expand educational and job training programs for Hawai'i Island residents
- Ensure our local communities are direct beneficiaries of the project's presence

I humbly urge the State of Hawai'i, the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority, and the University of Hawai'i to move decisively. This is our chance to demonstrate that Hawai'i can lead the world in science and in cultural integrity together, not apart.

Let us ensure that Maunakea continues to be a place where knowledge, respect, and opportunity thrive side by side.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

JoNelle Fukushima
Commissioner, Windward Planning Commission



Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii

August 13, 2025

The Honorable Josh Green
Governor, State of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Wendy F. Hensel, President
University of Hawaii
2444 Dole Street
Bachman Hall 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

The Honorable Kimo Alameda
Mayor, County of Hawai'i
25 Aupuni St., Suite 2603
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Bonnie D. Irwin, Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Hilo
University of Hawai'i at Hilo
200 W. Kāwili St.
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

John Komeiji, Chair
John De Fries, Executive Director
Mauna Kea Stewardship & Oversight
Authority
600 'Imiloa Place
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

RE: **URGENT ACTION TO KEEP THE THIRTY METER TELESCOPE IN HAWAI'I
FOR OUR FUTURE**

Aloha Governor Green, Mayor Alameda, Chair Komeiji, Executive Director De Fries, President Hensel and Chancellor Irwin,

On behalf of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hawaii (JCCIH) we **URGE** state and local leaders to *take decisive action to secure the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on Maunakea*. This project is vital not only for Hawai'i's continued worldwide leadership in the field of astronomy, but for creating a stronger future for our children and all generations in Hawaii through enhanced education, jobs, and community opportunities.

Under new leadership since 2021, the Hilo-based Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) team has made sincere and significant efforts building trust and relationships on Hawai'i Island – especially with Native Hawaiian and rural communities. TMT has publicly acknowledged and apologized for contributing to community division, affirmed that its future on Maunakea rests with the Hawaiian community, and focused on listening, building relationships, and co-creating programs shaped by local priorities.

Over the past decade, TMT has **CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN \$6 MILLION** in sublease fees for its permitted Maunakea site and another \$6 million to community benefit programs – including the **THINK Fund**, which provides scholarships and educational support for Hawai‘i Island students. These benefits have been provided to our community by TMT despite the unjust denial of access to the site since 2019.

Now TMT’s future in Hawai‘i is at risk. Although it is the top-ranked astronomy project of the decade, the Trump Administration’s FY2026 budget proposal favors a rival project in Chile, while Spain has offered €400 million to host TMT in La Palma. Without urgent action, Hawai‘i could lose TMT – and the economic, educational, and cultural benefits it would bring – forever. We respectfully call on the State of Hawai‘i, the County of Hawai‘i, the Maunakea Stewardship & Oversight Authority (MKSOA), and the University of Hawai‘i to lead discussions on securing TMT’s future on Maunakea while ensuring the project honors Native Hawaiian culture, safeguards the environment, and delivers lasting benefits to Hawai‘i Island residents. ***Together, we can ensure that Maunakea remains a place where world-class science and Hawai‘i’s values thrive side by side, for the benefit of future generations.***

Moreover, TMT’s benefits extend far beyond contributing to economy and traditional STEM programs; examples include:

- **Agriculture Technology Vocational Program** with Hawai‘i Community College, training students in skills that strengthen local food security and sustainability.
- **Weekly In-School Tutoring** to help students recover from pandemic-related learning loss, with TMT staff providing one-on-one academic support in local schools
- **‘Ale Lau Loa Indigenous Cultural Exchange Program** with Hawai‘i County and Hawaiian cultural practitioners, enabling Hawaiian high school students to connect with peers in Okinawa, Japan, and First Nations communities in Canada
- **Planned Mirror Assembly Lab**, the national facility for assembling and testing TMT’s precision mirrors, offering workforce training, internships, and technology incubation opportunities on Hawai‘i Island.

Our members are mainly small business owners and members of our Hawai‘i Island community who care deeply about the future we are leaving for our children, grandchildren and future generations. We recognize the concerns that have been raised and believe they have been adequately addressed through the process over many years. We now ask that the TMT project, which was approved through the legal process, be supported so that it will actually be built, astronomy will be recognized and supported, and the promise of scientific discovery and continued benefits of education and economic opportunity be realized for our people in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitchell Dodo".

Mitchell Dodo

President of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawai'i

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Sept 10, 2025

Aloha Chair and Members of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the Thirty Meter Telescope project on Mauna Kea.

The Thirty Meter Telescope represents not only an unparalleled advancement in science and education, but also a transformative opportunity for Hawai'i Island. Beyond the groundbreaking research that will inspire future generations, TMT will bring direct, much needed and lasting economic benefits to our community

- **Local Business Growth and Jobs:** Construction, operations, and ongoing maintenance will generate opportunities for Hawai'i Island contractors, suppliers, and service providers. The project will also sustain high-quality local jobs and create career pathways so that our keiki can build their futures here at home.
- **Investment in Education and Workforce Development:** Through programs like the THINK Fund and other community benefit contributions, TMT has already demonstrated its commitment to reinvesting in our keiki and future workforce—even during the years without site access. These investments ensure that local students are better prepared for STEM fields and beyond.
- **Cultural Respect and Community Engagement:** Over the past several years, meaningful progress has been made in communication and relationship-building with Native Hawaiian and Hawai'i Island communities. TMT's willingness to listen, honor cultural protocols, and work toward shared stewardship reflects a model of kuleana that we should continue to strengthen.

In closing, TMT is not just about science, it is about education, jobs, business opportunities, and our collective future. It can coexist with cultural respect and environmental stewardship, and it has the potential to be one of the most positive and transformative projects for Hawai'i Island in our lifetime.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully

Randy Kurohara

