



W. M. Keck Observatory Position statement: Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority

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The W. M. Keck Observatory welcomes the establishment of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority (“Authority”) and the potential for positive transformation that it brings. The Authority is grounded in a community-based mutual stewardship model that puts Maunakea at the center of importance, an essential shift in perspective that will allow astronomy to thrive intertwined with the interests of our fellow community-members.

The mutual stewardship model embodied in the Authority reflects and is strongly aligned with the astronomy profession’s broader aspirations. The recently published Astro2020 Decadal Survey,¹ a strategic document commissioned by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. Astro2020 provides a roadmap of astronomy priorities over the next 10 years, informs Congress and federal agencies, and presents a powerful vision for a community model of astronomy.

The final structure of the bill establishing the Authority meets the core principles² shared with the Legislature by Keck, Subaru Telescope, and Gemini Observatory, which include:

- Recognition and appreciation for the privilege of operating astronomical telescopes on Maunakea.
- Support for Native Hawaiian involvement in Maunakea governance
- Support for responsible management of the environmental and cultural resources of Maunakea
- A managing entity that is supportive of a future for astronomy on Maunakea
- The ability to secure stable, long-term leases for our facilities
- A viable, sustainable financial model for sharing the costs of administering the site
- An astronomy voice in the deliberations of the governing body

We mahalo our State Legislators for their leadership in establishing and supporting the Mauna Kea Working Group, and working tirelessly through the many complexities during this legislative session, to craft this thoughtful legislation that will shape our future. We thank the Mauna Kea Working Group for the sincere spirit of collaboration in pursuit of solutions, and for the opportunity for the Observatories to participate in full. We continue to be grateful for the hard work and passionate commitment of the staff of the UH Center For Maunakea Stewardship; their critical daily efforts will continue through the transition years as they keep our visitors safe on the mauna, research and protect rare and endangered species found on the mountain’s slopes, and maintain the infrastructure that allows for safe access.

The W. M. Keck Observatory commits to building a relationship of reciprocity, collaboration and transparency with the Authority to ensure alignment for our projects and initiatives moving forward. We look forward to participating actively in all upcoming opportunities as the new Authority starts to work on rule-making and other key decisions, and eagerly anticipate participating with an open mind and spirit of collaboration into the future.

¹www.nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26141/pathways-to-discovery-in-astronomy-and-astrophysics-for-the-2020s

²www.keckobservatory.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Maunakea-Principles-for-future-Maunakea-mgmt.pdf?x32463