



**2019 Executive Board  
July 26, 2019**

**RESOLUTION #19 - 40**

**“URGING THE HALTING OF FURTHER DESECRATION AND  
DESTRUCTION UPON THE SACRED MOUNTAIN OF  
MAUNA KEA IN HAWAI‘I”**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders, and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of the ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, Mauna Kea on Hawai‘i Island is also known by the name of Mauna a Wākea (Mountain of Sky Father); and it’s the meeting place of Wākea (Sky Father) and Papahānaumoku (Earth Mother), where heaven and earth meet; and it’s in this union that the islands of Hawai‘i were born; and

**WHEREAS**, the physical prominence of Mauna Kea as well as its stationing nearest to the heavens, tallest mountain in the world from the sea floor to the summit, holds a spiritual significance for Kanaka Maoli (aka Native Hawaiians), a significance that can be expressed in likening the mountain to a sacred altar; and

**WHEREAS**, from time immemorial, Mauna Kea has been considered sacred because it's a *piko* (portal) connected to Ke Akua (The Creator) where life force energies flow into the islands of Hawai'i through its summit; and the upper region of this mountain is also considered a *wao akua* - realm and home of divine beings and ancestral *akua* and *kupua* (gods, goddesses, deities) including Poli'ahu of the snow and ice, Lilinoe of the mist, Waiau of the sacred lake, and Mo'oinanea, guardian of these waters on the summit; and

**WHEREAS**, Kanaka Maoli still maintain their ancestral connections to Mauna Kea and their ancestral *akua* and *kupua*; and Kanaka Maoli still continue their cultural traditions and practices connected to this sacred mountain; and a place reserved for the making of prayers and giving of sacred offerings; and it's more than a mountain, it's the embodiment of the indigenous people of Hawai'i; and

**WHEREAS**, for the past several decades, Kanaka Maoli and community members have sought the protection of the fragile environment, cultural landscape, *wahi kapu* (sacred sites) and the recognition of Kanaka Maoli rights to practice and maintain cultural traditions and customs on this revered mountain; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Hawai'i has failed to protect the traditional and customary rights and practices of Kanaka Maoli associated with Mauna Kea; and this was further demonstrated with the attack upon such rights and practices with the recent destruction of their religious *ahu* (shrines) and *hale pule* (prayer house) on Mauna Kea; and

**WHEREAS**, over fifty years of mismanagement by the State of Hawai'i and University of Hawai'i have allowed the overdevelopment of Mauna Kea with astronomy facilities including 13 telescopes that have caused substantial, significant, and adverse cumulative impacts upon its natural and cultural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, further immense desecration and destruction is being planned on Mauna Kea with the Thirty Meter Telescope [TMT] project being developed by the TMT International Observatory LLC (comprised of the University of California & CalTech along with foreign partners from Canada, Japan, China, and India); and the TMT as proposed would be by far the largest observatory on Mauna Kea and over 18 stories tall, making it the tallest structure on the island that would cause extreme harm with the excavation of over eight acres of a sensitive environment and sacred landscape; and the proposed TMT project would cause further physical and spiritual imbalance and disharmony to this venerated mountain and to everyone and everything connected to it; and this project would have a major negative effect on Kanaka Maoli and their traditional religious and cultural practices; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed TMT project is in violation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP] that recognizes the inherent rights of indigenous peoples under a human rights framework that includes the protection of cultural and religious practices, the right to government participation and representation, and broad rights to use and

access traditional lands and religious sites as well as government protection of indigenous lands; and Mauna Kea is therefore protected under the following UNDRIP Articles concerning traditional lands and religious practices: Article 11 - the right of indigenous people to engage both in traditional practices and to continue to develop contemporary practices, Article 12 -the right to practice including a right of private access to these sites, and Article 25 - the right of indigenous people to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands; and


**WHEREAS**, the proposed TMT project is also in contravention of Article 8(2)(b) of UNDRIP which outlines that States shall provide mechanisms for indigenous peoples to prevent any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them from their lands, territories, or resources; and it's clear that the proposed construction and operation of the TMT would displace and dispossess Kanaka Maoli from their sacred lands and resources; and


**WHEREAS**, furthermore, the proposed TMT project is being done without the "free, prior and informed consent" of Kanaka Maoli; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians urge the State of Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i, and TMT International Observatory LLC (comprised of the California Institute of Technology, University of California, National Institutes of Natural Sciences of Japan, National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Department of Science and Technology of India, National Research Council (Canada), Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA) along with major funding provided by the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation) to **halt further desecration and destruction upon the sacred mountain of Mauna Kea in Hawai'i.**

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a quorum of the ATNI Executive Board on July 26, 2019, by e-mail.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Leonard Forsman, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Jean Loue, Secretary