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Kūpuna Take Stand on Maunakea Access Road and State Stands Down

Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu

July 16, 2019

Aloha kākou,

Today, kūpuna occupied the Maunakea Access Road in kapu aloha from 7am to approximately 4pm. This action was in response to the state's decision to unfairly deny access to Native Hawaiians to the Mauna Kea Access Road.

This morning we learned that the state planned to open access to the Maunakea Access Road to two groups of people: National Guard personnel sent to ensure the successful implementation of the state's TMT construction preparation plans; and telescope maintenance and service personnel for existing telescopes.

In contrast, Native Hawaiians, including practitioners, and hunters and gatherers are currently prohibited from accessing the Maunakea Access Road beyond the state's lower checkpoint near the entrance of the access road. Additionally, the state is currently taking measures to further restrict and securitize any access by Native Hawaiians to Maunakea. The kupuna of the Maunakea 'ohana at Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu chose to sit and occupy the bottom of the Maunakea access road, refusing free access to the National Guard and telescope service personnel until terms of access could be negotiated.

The terms discussed and agreed upon by the Maunakea 'ohana were as follows:

1. No National Guard allowed access up the Maunakea Access Road.
2. Telescope service and maintenance personnel could access the Maunakea Access Road to perform their normal duties to ensure the normal operations and safety of the telescopes currently situated on Maunakea.
3. Native Hawaiian cultural and religious practitioners be allowed to access the Maunakea Access Road from the entrance up, only one vehicle per day, which would be agreed upon by both the Maunakea 'ohana and law enforcement representatives.
4. That the Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu be allowed to maintain its own checkpoint at the bottom of the Maunakea Access road to ensure that vehicles and personnel agreed upon in negotiations are indeed the only ones accessing the road, as violations of previous agreements and understandings have been breached prior to today.

Unfortunately, the state flatly refused these terms. The kūpuna of the Maunakea 'ohana deliberated and in response decided to remain seated across the bottom of the Maunakea Access Road and face arrests. After approximately eight hours of occupying the road, law enforcement stated that there will be no arrests and that no personnel will be moved up the Maunakea Access Road today.

The kūpuna who took a stand today occupied the road in kapu aloha for the protection of Maunakea and for the rights and dignity of the Hawaiian people. These kupuna are pillars who have long cared for and contributed greatly to our larger community. They took this stand out of deep aloha and are committed to continue to lead us on the frontlines.

We stand proudly with these anchors of our community! The call from the Maunakea 'ohana to the lāhui Hawai'i and all supporters is that now is the time. Come to Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu to kāko'o and strengthen our stand to protect Maunakea. Together we are strong, we are resolute, and we are united in kapu aloha and in our love for our ancestor, Maunakea. Maunakea needs you. E hele mai!

A hiki i ke aloha 'āina hope loa,
The Maunakea 'Ohana
Pu'uhonua o Pu'uhuluhulu

Names of kūpuna:

Maxine Kahā'ulelio
Luana Busby-Neff
Leilani Lindsey-Ka'apuni
Billy Freitas
Onaona Trask
Dr. Noenoe Wong-
Wilson Gwen Kim
Skippy Ioane
Dr. Henry Lee Loy
Dr. Jonathan-Kay
Osorio Robertta Bennet
Liko Martin
Keaula Swayn
Cindy Freitas
Keoni Turalde
Kini Burke
Patricia Ikeda

Nāko'olani Lee Loy Warrington
Susan Rosier
Ranette Robinson
Patricia Louise Leimomi Greene
Ali'i Sir Kalikolehua Kanaele
Tomas Belsky
Danny Li
Walter Ritte
Loretta Ritte
Daycia-Dee Nohealani Kalima
Chun Leiānuenue Niheu
Abel Simeona
Hank Fergstrom
Bridgit Lee Loy Bales
Jimmy Nani'ole
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