

# Rep. Tulsi Gabbard's Statement on Mauna Kea

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While the legal process has determined that TMT may proceed, there are spiritual and cultural issues that have not been addressed. This is about something much greater than the TMT project — it has to do with longstanding history on Mauna Kea, broken promises, desecration of sacred land and disrespect for native culture.

To many Native Hawaiians, kama'āina, and malihini alike, Mauna Kea is so much more than a mountain. It's a revered and sacred sanctuary connecting keiki and kupuna to the past, present and future, and where Native Hawaiians practice their customs and traditions.

The materialistic way that developers and corporations are viewing Mauna Kea — ignoring the spiritual significance and relationship many Native Hawaiians have with the Mauna — is at the heart of the problem.

It is hypocritical that many TMT proponents speak of their own spiritual quest for knowledge and wisdom, while simultaneously closing their eyes to the spiritual inspiration and significance that Mauna Kea offers — not only to Native Hawaiians but to humanity at large. Spiritual nourishment and inspiration is of much greater and lasting value than anything money can buy.

It is this spiritual blindness often born out of arrogance or greed that is at the root of the desecration of our precious environment throughout the country and around the world.

Mauna Kea has been a source of spiritual inspiration for so many generations, and will continue to offer that inspiration in the future, if it is not desecrated by those whose hearts are too hard to appreciate the value of the unseen transcendental/spiritual reality that is not visible to our physical eyes.

While no one can change the past, now is the time for leaders to build a new, just path for the future. I urge Governor Ige to withdraw the emergency declaration, delay any new construction, and bring leaders together from both sides in the spirit of aloha to ho‘oponopono and determine the best path forward. The people of a given ‘āina must have a role to play in what happens in their ‘āina.

Trust must be earned — it is wrong that state leaders have approved the development of a new telescope on a new site on Mauna Kea, without first ensuring the timely removal of decommissioned facilities along with full restoration of those sites. This failure and a history of broken promises has resulted in the standoff that we are seeing today, and the lack of trust that government promises to respect the ‘āina and sacred places will be kept.

Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono. The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness. This shouldn't be just a slogan. It must be our way of life.

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About Rep. Tulsi Gabbard: Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard is serving her fourth term in the United States House representing Hawai'i's Second District, and serves on the House Armed Services and Financial Services Committees. She previously served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Homeland Security Committee. She was elected to the Honolulu City Council in 2010, and prior to that at age 21, was elected to the Hawai'i State Legislature in 2002, becoming the youngest person ever elected in the state. Tulsi Gabbard has served in the Hawai'i Army National Guard for 16 years, is a veteran of two Middle East deployments, and continues to serve as a Major. Learn more about Rep. Tulsi Gabbard... (/about)

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