



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
March 24, 2011 at 2:00pm
by
Donald O. Straney
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

**HCR 197/HR 170 – SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE PIPELINE PROGRAM OF THE
THIRTY METER TELESCOPE PROJECT**

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Hawai'i Community College are major developers of the trained workforce needed in Hawai'i County. We place a priority on meeting workforce needs of our community and state. We welcome, therefore, efforts such as those described in this resolution, to stimulate and sustain a broad range of activities to prepare our citizens for rewarding careers in the County.

We are pleased to support the resolution and thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony of C. Mike Kido
External Affairs
The Pacific Resource Partnership

House Committee on Higher Education
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair
Representative Mark Nakashima, Vice Chair

HCR 197/HR 170 – SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE PIPELINE PROGRAM OF THE
THIRTY METER TELESCOPE PROJECT

Thursday, March 24, 2011

2:00 pm

Conference Room 309

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Nakashima and members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

My name is C. Mike Kido, External Affairs of The Pacific Resource Partnership (PRP) a labor-management consortium representing over 240 union signatory contractors and the Hawaii Carpenters Union. The Pacific Resource Partnership strongly supports TMT and its plans to construct a new thirty meter telescope at the top of Mauna Kea.

The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) at Mauna Kea, has the potential to become an “industry standard” with regard to the comprehensive approach that was taken in planning this project. This project is one of the most comprehensive of its kind, taking into consideration the various types of impacts a project of this size will have on the environment and the community.

This project will not only benefit the worldwide scientific community as a whole, but will also serve to directly benefit those of Native Hawaiian ancestry, residents of the Big Island, and most importantly, will create work for numbers of unemployed and helping them to provide for their families during these tough economic times.

The global economic recession, tightening national credit markets, and stagnating local economies have played a large part in affecting the lives of our local people. Tourism on the neighbor islands has taken the hardest hit due to the global and national economic conditions. UHERO reports that Hawaii County’s unemployment rate through November 2010 was 9.8%. The total number of jobs in the accommodation and food service sector fell by 0.8% during 2010, despite increases of 6.1% in total visitor count and 17.6% in visitor expenditures for the prior year. However it is important to note that these figures are compared to lower levels experienced during 2009.

Construction and Mining jobs in Hawaii County continue to be hit the hardest as jobs declined by 14.1% for 2010, according to UHERO. The pipeline of government construction work generated from the Federal and State stimulus plans continue to provide some relief, however the considerable fallout from the private sector continues to hamper the overall health of the construction industry.

Additionally, the Hawaii Carpenters Union, Local 745 reports that 75% of their Hilo members and 97% of their Kona members are currently unemployed.

Benefits from this Project:

- Estimated project costs may exceed \$1 billion – potential for federal money to be infused into the State's and County's economy creating both direct and indirect local jobs.
- Due to the highly sophisticated and technical nature of the project, certain construction material and equipment that is available in Hawaii will be procured locally, supporting local vendors and suppliers.
- Along with construction workers, positions that need to be filled include: administrative and financial services, software and information technology engineering, mechanical engineering, and installation and service technicians. The project will provide long term potential employment and varied job opportunities that cover a wide variety of skill sets and knowledge base.
- Skilled trade employees include: carpenters, steelworkers, electricians, plumbers, heavy equipment operators, laborers, supervisors, shipping and trucking service workers, caterers, paramedics, security personnel, and vehicle mechanics.
 - Construction crew personnel are expected to receive Union wages
 - Estimated 50-60 workers would be required at the TMT observatory construction site alone; during certain phases, up to 100 workers
- Housing and support services will be provided to certain construction personnel if they choose to take advantage of such a facility.

Aside from the benefits to the worldwide and local communities affected by this project, we feel that TMT is a critical component for helping to bolster an already depressed economy on the Big Island of Hawaii by creating jobs that will put the local workforce back to work.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to comment on this project and we kindly ask for your support on HCR 197/HR 170 Supporting the Workforce Pipeline Program of the Thirty Meter Telescope Project.



March 23, 2011

Aloha Members of the Higher Education Committee,

Since we began conversations with the Thirty Meter Telescope project, I have been one of its many champions. By way of introduction, my name is Roberta Chu, Senior Vice President and Hawaii Island Manager, Bank of Hawaii.

I am very active with my island community but more than this, I am a mother who believes in the far reaching educational opportunities a project like Thirty Meter Telescope brings not only to the Big Island but to our entire state.

Devin, our 17-year old son, attends Dartmouth College. He is a good student and we are proud of his achievements. I know that what he learns today has a profound influence on his future.

As a mother, I'm worrying about job opportunities available to him after college. Will he be able to remain on the Big Island, or will Devin, like so many others, need to uproot and move elsewhere to fulfill his dreams?

Devin has a keen interest in astronomy, fueled in large part by the exciting discoveries taking place atop Mauna Kea. This mountain, sacred in Hawaiian culture and a natural wonder, is an inspirational presence. Devin saw the mountain every day growing up and I believe Mauna Kea has sparked his interest in exploring the universe.

If our children are to succeed in Hawaii, we must have high-tech, high-skill, high-paying jobs right here at home, not only on the Big Island, but throughout all our island communities.

The Thirty Meter Telescope, an incredibly awe-inspiring endeavor, brings with it tremendous opportunity for the children of Hawaii to literally reach for the stars. Our entire state is on the threshold of a brighter future. TMT will contribute long term, sustainable community benefits, making new educational opportunities possible such as scholarships and developing a Workforce Pipeline Program to

ensure that as many local people as possible are ready for these high-tech, high-paying jobs.

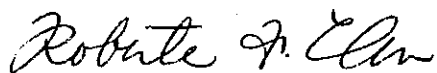
I have volunteered my time to help the Thirty Meter Telescope for the past 5 years and have been part of the organizing committee for TMT's THINK (The Hawaii Island New Knowledge) Fund. The THINK Fund will provide \$1 million per year for scholarships for Hawaii Island students and be administered through the Hawaii Community Foundation and the Ke Alii Pauahi Foundation.

I am happy to report that TMT is putting the same kind of effort into establishing its Workforce Pipeline Program and is collaborating with the University of Hawaii Hilo, Hawaii Community College, DOE and public and private workforce agencies.

I have been personally active in collaborating with TMT and the Hawaii Island Economic Development Board in ongoing conversations with the County of Hawaii and University of Hawaii Hilo officials on the Workforce Pipeline Program. Although the Workforce Pipeline Program is in its formative stages I'm encouraged by TMT's commitment.

For all the wonderful possibilities the Thirty Meter Telescope will bring to Hawaii, I am supportive of their efforts in this once in a generation project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roberta F. Chu".

Roberta F. Chu
Senior Vice President and Manager

HCR 197/HR 170 Supporting the Workforce Pipeline Program of the 30 Meter Telescope Project

Alfred Lardizabal [lardizabal@local368.org]

Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 8:17 AM

To: HEDtestimony

March 23, 2011

To the Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, March 24, 2011
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309
State Capitol

Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair; Representative Mark M. Nakashima Vice Chair and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

The Hawaii Laborers' Union strongly supports both resolutions, HCR 197 and HR 170 that encourages public and private sector agencies to help develop, implement, and sustain a comprehensive Workforce Pipeline Program that will prepare the local workforce for employment at the 30-meter telescope project and other high technology projects in Hawaii.

Workforce development in technology and other areas that make our workforce competitive in a global economy is vital to our long-term future success.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Al Lardizabal, Director of Government Relations
Hawaii Laborers Union

Testimony
by
Dr. James R. Kennedy
Before the House Committee on Education
Regarding HCR 197 and HR 170
March 24, 2011

My name is Jim Kennedy. I am a retired educator and astronomer, and a resident of Papa'ikou on the Island of Hawai'i. I've done work in the Hilo area for more than 24 years, and it's been our home for the last 13 years. I had the honor to be one of the original seven members of the University of Hawai'i Mauna Kea Management Board, where I served for six years. I am a past president of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, and I am currently a Vice Chair for the County of Hawai'i Workforce Investment Board. However, I am testifying today as a private citizen and not as a representative of any particular organization.

I am strongly in favor of encouraging the Thirty Meter Telescope to immediately begin the process of outlining its workforce pipeline goals, strategies, outcomes, and identifying proposed collaborative partners, as suggested by HCR 197 and HR 170.

The workforce pipeline will have a dramatic and positive impact on the island of Hawai'i and the State, by significantly enhancing both the educational and employment opportunities for current and future generations of our keiki.

The core of this effort is described as a coordinated effort to enhance STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in the K-12 schools of Hawai'i Island, and technical education at the two-year and four-year college level, coupled with enhanced job training through internships, apprenticeships, and similar opportunities, as well as scholarships and mentoring programs. These are just the sorts of things that are needed.

It is important to note that the final collapse of sugar on Hawai'i Island occurred barely two decades ago. Even now, it continues to effect the future of our students *still in the K-12 and college systems* today. One clear indicator of this is that 52% of the students at UH Hilo are in the first generation in their families to ever attend college.

Moreover, the economic base of Hawai'i Island is still rather narrow and dominated by low-tech, little value-added industries. This creates a *vicious cycle*. There is little or no incentive for investments in clean high-tech businesses on the Island, because there is no suitable local workforce to sustain them.

At the same time, there is no incentive for young people (and their parents) to make the personal and financial investments to get the education that would allow the upcoming generation to qualify for these kinds of modern 21st century jobs – because the investments aren't being made.

Those of our children who *do* have the encouragement and resources to finish their education through the college level, all too frequently pack up and leave Hawai'i Island upon graduation, simply because they cannot find meaningful local employment matching their education,

training, and personal aspirations. As a consequence, many of our brightest and best-trained young people are constantly being drained away, and this has been going on for decades.

Absent some constructive intervention, such as the TMT pipeline, the entire economic and social future of the Island is at serious risk of sinking ever lower, while the rest of the world moves on.

Recent surveys have shown that there are hundreds of jobs in technology and administration within the observatories that will become available over the next decade that have only two-year or four-year college entrance requirements and that are *not* currently filled by local people, but *only* because of the lack of an adequate qualified workforce pool.

These local jobs already exist. Building a local workforce to fill them is a sensible way to progressively “bootstrap” our community into a larger modern workforce that will then attract other suitable business investments to take advantage of that workforce.

For more than two years now, the County of Hawai‘i Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has been working with all the Mauna Kea observatories, including TMT, to substantially increase the fraction of current Hawai‘i Island astronomy jobs occupied by local people.

It is clear that this will involve developing a cooperative program among our various local educational resources to provide better and more STEM-based education, training, and internship opportunities for our keiki at all levels – from kindergarten to college graduation.

TMT has been there in the forefront, as a full working partner in this effort so far, and will be bringing *new* jobs for local people, in *addition* to those available at the current observatories.

In the TMT EIS, they have pledged significant financial investments in local education, job training, internships, scholarships, mentoring, and a wide range of related activities, all to be realized within our community and under local direction.

The local community efforts so far have set the stage. Now is right time for the TMT workforce pipeline to begin ramping up. In partnership with community resources, this collective effort has the capacity to literally transform the lives of our families, especially our poorest families, and yet do it in a way that is locally managed in concert with Island cultures and traditions.