My name is Leilani Lindsey-Ka‘apuni. I am the mother of Joseph Kūali‘i Lindsey Camara, the daughter of Henry Keawe Lindsey, and a lineal descendant of Kūkahau’ula through chief Keawemauhili. The genealogy of many Hawaiian families, passed down through oral tradition for hundreds of years and gathered and documented by my father between 1945–1980, is preserved on 121 reels of microfilm known as the Henry K. Lindsey Collection held in our family’s possession and by the LDS church.

This collection of Hawaiian genealogy was gathered through years of research and personal interviews with ‘ohana and knowledgeable kūpuna who entrusted their most cherished knowledge, their moʻokūʻauhau, to be preserved for future generations. The responsibility to hold these records came with a strict admonition from my father never to use genealogy to elevate or aggrandize oneself, but only when necessary to reconnect families, to rightfully claim and defend our lands and to protect the bones of our ancestors.

In these genealogical records, we find our connection to kūpuna who dwelt, worshipped, died and are buried on Maunakea. Among them is Kūkahau’ula, whose bones were buried at the summit in ancient times according to traditional custom. Many of the bones of his descendants are also buried at the summit of Maunakea. The iwi of our ancestors are considered sacred and are to be guarded, protected, respected and venerated. Desecration of iwi kūpuna results in insult to the spirit of our ancestors, trauma to their living descendants and harm to the desecrators.

We know that many of our iwi kūpuna were desecrated during the construction of earlier telescopes on Maunakea, including the W. M. Keck Observatory and Subaru Telescope, even when preliminary surveys declared that there were no known burials at those sites. The archeological surveys of the proposed site of the TMT also state that there are no culturally significant sites or known burials on the northern plateau. Similar statements made prior to construction of earlier observatories were proven false after the unearthing and desecration of ancestral remains. TIO cannot know with 100% certainty that there are no burials and culturally significant sites at the proposed site of the TMT.

Also recorded in our genealogies is the history of Umi-a-Liloa, chief of Hawai‘i and progenitor of thousands of Hawaiians living today, who erected places of worship on Maunakea that remain to this day. Umi-a-Liloa designated the ‘āina mauna sacred and placed a responsibility upon his people and his descendants to uphold the kapu and sacredness of Maunakea.

Our genealogies also make clear to us that we are heirs and beneficiaries of Hawaiian crown and government lands, currently controlled by the US and their agents in the Hawaiian Islands and referred to as “Ceded Lands.” These lands, which include Maunakea, were never ceded. According to law, they are held in perpetuity for the benefit of kanaka Hawai‘i maoli.

Our moʻokūʻauhau and our ancestral connections to Maunakea from time immemorial place upon us a kuleana and responsibility to uphold and protect sacred land and the burial places of our iwi kūpuna. This, we and our children and their children are committed to do. To ignore this responsibility would be to completely disregard that which is most sacred to us.