

FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE

MKSOA BODs

June 12, 2025

NSF NHPA SECTION 106

“NSF has decided to delay holding "National Historic Preservation Act" Section 106 consultation meetings to allow time to assess how to align this effort with other agency wide activities.”



U.S. National Science Foundation



Greetings. The U.S. National Science Foundation would like to share the following update, which was recently posted to the Thirty Meter Telescope environmental review [website](#):

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is providing this update to maintain transparency and keep the community informed on the status of the environmental review for the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope. NSF has decided to delay holding "National Historic Preservation Act" Section 106 consultation meetings to allow time to assess how to align this effort with other agency-wide activities. NSF appreciates the commitment of the consulting parties* and will share updates concerning when the Section 106 process may resume.

**Parties that have consultative roles in the Section 106 process per 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800.2 and who confirmed their interest in participating in 2024.*

Thank you,
U.S. National Science Foundation

Administration's Proposed NSF Budget

Design of Potential New Major Facility Construction Project.

Given the unaffordability of continuing funding two different multi-billion-dollar telescopes, NSF will advance the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT) into the Major Facility Final Design Phase, but the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) will not advance to the Final Design Phase and will not receive additional commitment of funds from NSF. NSF has received assurances from the GMT project that it can complete the final design phase without further investments. Moving into the final design phase does not guarantee that a project will be approved for construction, and doing so does not obligate the agency to provide any further funding. The FY 2026 Request supports continued design of a single telescope within the U.S. Extremely Large Telescope (ELT) program.



PROPOSED NSF AND NASA BUDGET REDUCTIONS

- ❖ The Planetary Defense program remains supported, which means continued funding for **IRTF**, PanSTARRS, and ATLAS. Those 7 telescopes are 100% funded by NASA.
- ❖ NASA funding for **Keck** is zeroed out; ~17% cut to Keck's budget.
- ❖ NSF proposes to cut **Gemini's** budget by 39%; total US portion of Gemini's budget = 68%.
- ❖ NSF proposes to cut DKIST's (Haleakala) budget by 39%.
- ❖ NSF proposes to cut National Radio Astronomy Observatory's (NRAO) O&M budget by 45%; **VLBA's** budget presumably comes from that allocation.
- ❖ **TMT** was not recommended to proceed to Final Design Review by NSF. Though TMT is pressing ahead, UH is not aware of their path to funding construction.
 - If TMT does not proceed, the implications for **Subaru's** budget is TBD.
- ❖ The federal portion of Smithsonian's (**SMA**) budget was cut by 25%.
- ❖ 75.2% reduction in NSF grants budget; **IfA** ~40 graduate students supported by NASA and NSF grants.

WHAT WE KNOW, AND DON'T

NSF has paused
their NHPA
Section 106
consultation
process for TMT.

Many things can
change between
now and a final
FY26 budget;
politics will
determine that
outcome.

The impact to UH
and MKO budgets,
and ultimately to
CMS and our
stewardship and
research support
activities, is unknown
but certain to ensue.

The impacts to
IfA are still to be
determined but
the threat to
Hawai'i astronomy
go far beyond
TMT.