

ASTRONOMY

Hawaii telescope gets go-ahead

Construction permit granted, but legal fight continues.

BY ALEXANDRA WITZE

Hawaii's board of land and natural resources granted a new construction permit to the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on 28 September, reviving the chances that the next-generation observatory could be built on the Hawaiian mountain of Mauna Kea.

Some Native Hawaiians oppose the TMT, saying that its construction would further violate a sacred mountain that already hosts multiple telescopes. In December 2015, following years of court battles, Hawaii's supreme court invalidated the TMT's first construction permit, ruling that the board had not followed appropriate procedures in granting it. The new permit effectively replaces that one, giving the project the legal right to proceed.

But the TMT saga is far from over. Telescope opponents have filed motions that would put the permit on hold until the state supreme court hears an appeal. "Construction should not begin before all legal processes have run their course," said KAHEA: The Hawaiian–Environmental Alliance, a group in Honolulu that opposes the TMT, in a statement. Mauna Kea "is being stripped and disrespected".

A CONTENTIOUS MATTER

The board's latest decision follows a July recommendation to issue the permit from retired judge Riki May Amano, who oversaw more than 40 days of hearings earlier this year for the board. Another set of public hearings took place this month, after which the seven-member board voted five to two to issue the permit.

"This was one of the most difficult decisions the board has ever made," said chairperson Suzanne Case.

The new permit adds requirements to construction plans for the telescope, including a zero-discharge wastewater system and cultural and natural-resources training for workers.

TMT supporters say that the telescope would bring educational and employment opportunities to a state with a long history of astronomy. "We are greatly encouraged," said TMT board chair Henry Yang in a statement. "In moving forward, we will listen respectfully to the community in order to realize the shared vision of Maunakea as a world center for Hawaiian culture, education and science."

Project organizers have been exploring the possibility of building the telescope on the Spanish island of La Palma if they cannot begin construction on Mauna Kea by April 2018. ■

CORRECTION

The News story 'CRISPR fixes embryo error' (*Nature* **548**, 13–14; 2017) incorrectly stated that all 42 embryos with normal copies of *MYBPC3* were successfully edited. All 42 contained normal copies, but some of those inherited the normal copies, rather than have them edited in.