

VLB ARRAY MEMO No. 275

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

Room 26 - 335

4 October 1983

Dr. Mark Gordon
NRAO
Suite 100,
North Forbes Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85705

Dear Mark:

Thanks for your letter of 29September83 commenting on my Mauna Kea memo.

Your first point, concerning the problem of siting a new telescope on Mauna Kea, is probably not correct, according to my information. The summit area of Mauna Kea has been designated an astronomical preserve, and jurisdiction has been well-defined, along with procedures for erecting new instruments. It is not an ordinary Conservation District, nor are the instruments there under a grandfather clause. Perhaps the VLB antenna can be built as the realization (!) of the 25-m telescope, perhaps the existing site plan is sufficiently flexible, perhaps new permission must be sought, but without question the facts should be obtained before judgments are rendered.

My information about Haleakala is that it is a hotbed of radio transmitters. Once a site has been accepted as an antenna field, more antennas are always built, and the NRAO would have no grounds for objection no matter how unpleasant the new neighbor might be. Those of us who fought hard for exclusive radio astronomy allocations always made the point that radio astronomers sought radio-quiet sites. A decision to put an antenna on Haleakala might undo years of work at building credibility with the frequency allocators, who have never been great enthusiasts for our cause.

Very truly yours,

Bernard F. Burke

BFB/km

cc: K. Kellermann