Two years ago the DKIST co-Is sent the NSO director a document that was circulated immediately before the recent DSPAC meetings in Maui and NJIT (see attached). In part it stated that:

“We believe the DKIST data access rules, while being consistent with AAAC policies, should also be formulated to mitigate the above (see first four points in original co-I doc) concerns for the DKIST stake-holder community. These stakeholders consist of the NSF science community, US and International instrument development and site partners, and current and future DKIST operation partners.”

Currently the instrument and site partners and two international partners each have negotiated a specific observing time allotment. Yet, there is ***no*** guaranteed time for the main stakeholder – the US community. We strongly believe that allocating a majority of telescope time to the US is essential for strengthening the US ground-based Solar research community. We noted two years ago that “support for US solar community scientists is likely to continue to be inadequate, which would work against the timely dissemination of scientific results, especially by U.S. Solar PI researchers, and this budgetary issue for support of US solar scientists is also likely to be exacerbated by projected shortfalls for DKIST operations, which could well require coverage from the grants program.” At present, the major component of individual US PI solar research support comes from NASA -- not NSF, so that unlike our international partners, the US community is poorly supported to perform DKIST data analysis and research at first light and after routine DKIST operations begin.

In this environment it is essential that DKIST have priority for US community observing proposals and have that data be treated as proprietary to US researchers for a period of time that allows the PI (likely with minimal NSF analysis support) to maximize the data’s scientific impact. We believe this proprietary period should be at least 6 months.

The current DSPAC plans for telescope access and data policy appear to be moving in a different direction. We urge the NSF to act to protect the US solar research ground-based community.