

Open Letter to the Government of Chile

To His Excellency the President of Chile, Gabriel Boric

The Honourable Minister of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation, Aldo Valle Acevedo

The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto van Klaveren Stork

The Honourable Minister of the Economy, Development and Tourism and Honourable Minister of Energy, Álvaro García Hurtado

The Honourable Minister of the Environment, Maisa Rojas Corradi

14 November 2025

Subject: Urgent appeal for the protection of the Paranal Observatory skies from the proposed INNA project

Excellencies,

We, the undersigned, an international group of eminent researchers, including Nobel Laureates, write to you to express our deep concern about the INNA project at its proposed location and to urge the relocation of the planned industrial site. As currently conceived, the project represents an imminent threat to some of the most advanced astronomical facilities on Earth, operating under one of the world's last pristine dark skies.

Chile's Atacama Desert is the best place for astronomy on the planet, thanks to its dark skies, stable atmosphere and clement weather. Among the astronomical sites in the Atacama Desert, the Paranal Observatory, like all other professional observatories, benefits from the world's darkest and clearest skies of any astronomical observatory. This precious natural heritage is rightly a source of immense pride for Chile. It also represents an irreplaceable scientific resource that has allowed generations of astronomers to expand humanity's understanding of the universe. As such it transcends borders because the astronomical discoveries that it makes possible, including our own, benefit all of humanity.

The European Southern Observatory (ESO), with support from Chile, has built and now operates at Paranal some of the most advanced observatories in existence. These include the Very Large Telescope (VLT) and its unique interferometer (VLTI), the forthcoming Extremely Large Telescope (ELT) and, in collaboration with the Cherenkov Telescope Array Observatory (CTAO), CTAO South. These are not only milestones of science, but symbols of Chile's central role in the global exploration of the cosmos. The ability of these facilities to observe the most distant and faintest cosmic sources hinges largely on preserving the pristine dark skies and environment


of their location. As Chilean Astronomer Eduardo Unda-Sanzana eloquently stated in a [recent New York Times piece](#): *"Darkness is what makes me see clearer. It is the medium through which I can observe the universe's most delicate details. It's like how you need silence to hear the quietest noises."*

The impact of the INNA project, planned to be located just a few kilometres from the VLT, the VLTi, the ELT, and CTAO South, would be devastating for the pristine skies of Paranal and for world astronomy. Earlier this year, an in-depth, data-driven [technical analysis](#) by ESO revealed that INNA would cause an increase of up to 35% in light pollution above Cerro Paranal. It also revealed other impacts of the project, from creating micro-vibrations that will negatively affect and possibly impede the operation of some of the most cutting-edge astronomical facilities, to increasing turbulence that blurs our view of the universe. The damage would extend beyond Chile's borders, affecting a worldwide scientific community that relies on observations made at Paranal to study everything from the formation of planets to the early universe.

While we recognise the need, both in Chile and globally, to develop green energy facilities, the proximity and extent of the infrastructure associated with the INNA project pose a grave threat, which cannot be mitigated given the closeness of the planned installation to the observatory. We are convinced that economic development and scientific progress can and must coexist **to the benefit of all people in Chile**, but not at the irreversible expense of one of Earth's unique and irreplaceable windows to the universe. We respectfully urge the Chilean government to call for the relocation of the INNA project and to protect the delicate Paranal environment [with stricter laws and updated regulations](#).

Over the past 60 years, Chile has become the world's capital of astronomy, in no small part thanks to its pioneering laws to protect the dark skies, its public awareness efforts and its increasingly strong astronomical community. Today, this natural and cultural heritage is part of the Chilean identity and a source of inspiration for people all over the planet. We trust that, in the next 60 years, the country will continue to show the world how to safeguard such a fragile and valuable heritage. In doing so, Chile will keep shining as a global example of care and vision for the future.

Sincerely,



Reinhard Genzel
Nobel Laureate in Physics (2020)
Max-Planck-Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, Germany



Conny Aerts
Kavli prize in Astrophysics 2022, Crafoord prize in Astronomy 2024
KU Leuven, Belgium



Willy Benz
President of the IAU
University of Bern



Jonathan Bland-Hawthorn
ARC Laureate Professor, Director
Sydney Institute for Astronomy, University of Sydney



Andreas Burkert
Chair: Computational and Theoretical Astrophysics
Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich, Germany
President of the German Astronomical Society from 2011 to 2014



Catherine Cesarsky
Grand Croix of the Ordre National du Mérite 2025
ESO Director General from 1999 to 2007
CEA, Université Paris Saclay



Françoise Combes
President of French Science Academy
Paris Observatory, Collège de France



Richard Davies
Principle Investigator of MICADO, first light ELT instrument
Max-Planck-Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, Germany



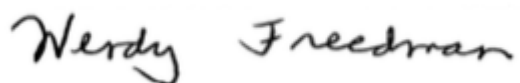
Roger Davies
Professor emeritus Philip Wetton Chair of Astrophysics
Department of Physics, University of Oxford



Frank Eisenhauer
Gruber Prize in Cosmology 2022
Max-Planck-Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, Germany



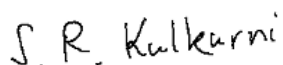
Richard S Ellis, CBE FRS
Professor of Astrophysics
University College London



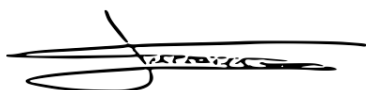
Wendy L. Freedman, FRS
Gruber Prize in Cosmology 2009
University of Chicago



Paulo J. V. Garcia
Professor
Universidade do Porto, Portugal



Shri Kulkarni, FRS
Shaw Prize 2024
California Institute of Technology, USA



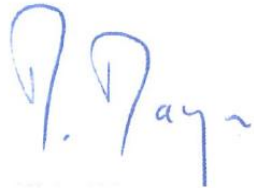
Sylvestre Lacour
Two-time ERC Principal Investigator
Director of Research, Paris Observatory / CNRS



Pierre Léna
Académie des sciences, France



Roberto Maiolino
Kavli Institute for Cosmology and Cavendish Laboratory, Department of Physics
University of Cambridge



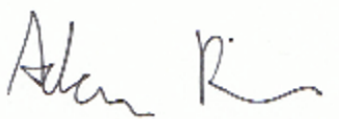
Michel Mayor
Nobel Laureate in Physics 2019
University of Geneva, Switzerland



Didier Queloz
Physics Nobel Prize Laureate 2019
University of Cambridge, UK & ETH Zurich, Switzerland



Marcia J. Rieke
Gruber Prize in Cosmology 2024
University of Arizona



Adam Riess
Nobel Prize Laureate 2011
Johns Hopkins University/STScI



Mónica Rubio
National Prize of Exact Sciences 2021
Universidad de Chile



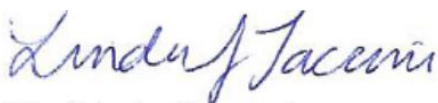
Maria Teresa Ruiz
National Prize of Exact Sciences 1997
Universidad de Chile



Brian Schmidt
Nobel Prize laureate 2011
Australia National University



Charles Steidel
Gruber Prize 2010



Linda Tacconi
Past President ESO Council
Max-Planck-Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Tremaine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S'.

Scott Tremaine, FRS
Institute for Advanced Study

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ewine van Dishoeck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Ewine van Dishoeck
IAU past-President, Kavli Prize in Astrophysics 2018
Leiden University, the Netherlands

And other eminent scientists and academics from around the world.