

An open letter to Reflect Orbital and its investors

To the leadership of Reflect Orbital and its Venture Capital partners:

On behalf of DarkSky International and our undersigned partners, we write as a global coalition of advocates, conservationists, and scientists committed to protecting the natural nighttime environment.

We appreciate your willingness to engage with us proactively, including recent conversations with our team. At the same time, the concept of illuminating Earth from orbit represents a new category of artificial light at night with global ecological, cultural, and regulatory consequences. Based on the current scientific evidence, we do not see a viable pathway for this technology to align with responsible lighting principles or with our mission to protect natural darkness.

Even low levels of artificial light at night have been shown to disrupt wildlife navigation, alter predator–prey dynamics, diminish nocturnal pollination, and contribute to rising skyglow that erases humanity’s view of the stars. Light introduced from orbit would scatter broadly through the atmosphere, adding to skyglow at a time when global light pollution is already increasing by an estimated 10 percent each year. These impacts are not hypothetical; they are well-established in peer-reviewed science.

We recognize that innovation often outpaces regulation, which is why open dialogue remains essential. Our position is firm, but our door remains open. Decisions on orbital technologies will advance with or without environmental expertise at the table, and we believe it is in the public interest—and in your interest—that these discussions are grounded in scientific evidence and transparent evaluation.

In that spirit, we respectfully urge Reflect Orbital and its investors to take three steps before advancing this technology further:

1. **Commit to an independent environmental impact assessment** for the EARENDIL-1 demonstration mission, conducted by qualified third-party experts.
2. **Pause development of the broader constellation** until the assessment is complete and publicly reviewed.

3. **Engage in a structured, multi-stakeholder dialogue** with DarkSky International, the IAU Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky, and other experts to evaluate whether any form of this technology could proceed without unacceptable environmental harm.

We believe innovation and environmental responsibility must advance together. We ask you to join us in ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of the night itself.

Respectfully,

Ruskin Hartley

CEO & Executive Director

DarkSky International

Co-signed by:

Individuals: Lukas Schuler

Organizations: DarkSky Switzerland