



Carta publicada en Science cuestiona decisiones ambientales del gobierno de Kast

Posted on Mayo 26, 2026

Un grupo de científicos chilenos encendió las alertas internacionales luego de publicar una carta en la revista científica Science donde manifiestan preocupación por el rumbo de las políticas ambientales en Chile tras el inicio del gobierno del presidente José Antonio Kast.

En el documento, los investigadores cuestionan especialmente la decisión del Ejecutivo de retirar 43 decretos ambientales que habían avanzado durante la administración anterior, encabezada por Gabriel Boric.

Según plantean los expertos, esta medida genera incertidumbre respecto a avances regulatorios vinculados a conservación, biodiversidad, cambio climático y salud pública.

“La solicitud de Kast ha generado alarma entre las comunidades científicas y de políticas públicas de Chile, ya que pone en peligro avances regulatorios en conservación, cambio climático y salud pública desarrollados a lo largo de múltiples administraciones”, señala la carta.

Los autores sostienen además que las políticas ambientales de largo plazo no deberían depender de

cambios de gobierno y llaman a mantener la continuidad de los compromisos asumidos por el Estado en esta materia.

Decretos pendientes y preocupación científica

Aunque seis de los decretos retirados ya fueron reingresados para continuar su tramitación, el resto permanece en revisión.

Parte importante de estas normas estaba relacionada con la implementación de la Ley Marco de Cambio Climático, legislación que fija como meta que Chile alcance la carbono neutralidad a más tardar en 2050.

Otros decretos buscaban fortalecer el funcionamiento del Servicio de Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas (SBAP), organismo creado en 2023 para coordinar la protección de ecosistemas y especies en el territorio nacional.

Entre las iniciativas pendientes también figura la creación de una red de salares protegidos, medida orientada a resguardar parte de estos ecosistemas altoandinos frente al avance de la explotación de litio.

“El progreso de Chile hacia una economía sostenible no debería depender de ciclos políticos”, remarcan los científicos.

Finalmente, los investigadores solicitaron mayor transparencia en el proceso de evaluación de los decretos aún pendientes, instando al gobierno a informar públicamente los criterios utilizados y las razones detrás de cada decisión.

LETTERS

Edited by
Jennifer Sills



Chile's recent regulatory rollbacks threaten ecosystems such as this high-altitude salt flat and wetland near the Lauca River.

Chile's environmental policy at risk

In March, Chile inaugurated a new administration under President José Antonio Kast, who is politically aligned with the international far right. Within a week, Kast requested the withdrawal of 43 environmental decrees—initiated by the previous government of Gabriel Boric—that were awaiting final legal review (1, 2). Since then, six of these decrees have been reintroduced for legal processing; the other 37 remain under evaluation (2). Kast's request has raised alarm among Chile's scientific and policy communities, as it jeopardizes regulatory progress on conservation, climate change, and public health that has been developed across multiple administrations. The new government should instead safeguard regulatory continuity and maintain Chile's long-term state policies on environmental policy commitments.

Seven of the withdrawn decrees addressed the Climate Change Framework Law, including instruments such as greenhouse gas offset markets, and 11 were related to the operationalization of the new Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service (SBAP) (3, 4). Delaying the implementation of the SBAP and related climate laws could undermine the legal frameworks that allow private entities to issue tradable certificates for carbon dioxide reduction, biodiversity management, and ecosystem services. This disruption, in turn, would jeopardize the development of market mechanisms that enable landowners to access public and private finance in exchange for verified conservation outcomes. Without these finance options, closing the biodiversity financing gap that underpins the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework would be more difficult (5).

Other withdrawn decrees proposed a network of protected salt flats, safeguarding at least 30% of these high-altitude ecosystems from lithium extraction, consistent with the global target of protecting 30% of the world's land and sea by 2030 (6). As one of the world's largest lithium reserve holders, Chile faces mounting pressure to ensure environmentally and socially responsible extraction (7–9).

Chile's progress toward a sustainable economy should not hinge on political cycles. In the case of 21 of the withdrawn decrees, previous laws established a deadline before which they must be drafted and enacted (10, 11). Failure to meet these timelines without explicit reasons would result in noncompliance with these laws. The removal of these regulations is difficult to reconcile with societal benefit or with Chile's commitments under major international agreements. Such reversals undermine the policy stability required for evidence-based environmental governance and weaken Chile's capacity to meet coupled climate-biodiversity targets.

The Kast administration should make the criteria guiding the evaluation of the remaining 37 decrees and the rationale for final decisions fully transparent and communicate the decisions clearly and promptly. These actions would provide consistent signals to national and international stakeholders, including to green investors and sustainability-driven companies (12), about the legal and environmental pathway Chile intends to pursue.

América Paz Durán¹, Ariel Espinoza-Galdames¹, Víctor Caro², Daniela Manuschevich³

¹Conservación Ecológica Consultores, Santiago, Chile. ²Departamento de Gestión y Políticas Públicas, Universidad de Santiago, Santiago, Chile. ³Departamento de Geografía, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile. Email: paz.duran.moya@gmail.com

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- Gobierno de Chile. "How has environmental protection improved over the last two years?" (2026); <https://www.gob.cl/en/news/how-has-environmental-protection-improved-over-the-last-two-years/>.
- A. Mufarech, "Chile's Kast halts green decrees in rush to undo Boric legacy," *Bloomberg News*, 17 March 2026.
- Comptroller Office. "Tramitación de reglamentos y otros actos de interés general - Retirados - 2026" [in Spanish]; <https://www.contratoria.cl/web/cgr/tramitacion-de-reglamentos-retirados-2026>.
- FIMA ONG. "New report provides key information for citizen monitoring of withdrawn environmental decrees"; <https://en.fima.cl/2026/04/02/nuevo-informe-entrega-claves-para-el-seguimiento-ciudadano-de-decretos-ambientales-retirados/>.
- A. Deutz et al., *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* **4**, 1511 (2020).
- I. Eckert et al., *Nat. Commun.* **14**, 7113 (2023).
- US Geological Survey. "Mineral Commodity Summaries 2025: Lithium" (2025); <https://pubs.usgs.gov/periodicals/mcs2025/mcs2025-lithium.pdf>.
- G. Gutiérrez, D. Ruiz-León, *Mater. Adv.* **5**, 7850 (2024).
- A. Z. Haddad et al., *Nature* **616**, 245 (2023).
- Ministerio del Medio Ambiente. Ley 21600: Crea el Servicio de Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas y el Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas [in Spanish]; <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1195666>.
- Ministerio del Medio Ambiente. Ley 21455: Ley Marco de Cambio Climático [in Spanish]; <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1177286>.
- "Chile places sovereign bond with biodiversity targets," *Green Finance for Latin America and the Caribbean*, 8 January 2026; <https://greenfinancelac.org/resources/news/chile-places-sovereign-bond-with-biodiversity-targets/>.

COMPETING INTERESTS

A.E.-G., V.C., and D.M. were employed by the Ministry of Environment during the Boric administration and helped write the withdrawn decrees.

10.1126/science.aeh6525

PHOTO: PAZ DURÁN



El Maipo