

*Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications*

*An tAire Comhshaoil, Aeráide agus Cumarsáide*

*Irish Republic*

March 17, 470 AD.

Dear Mr. Saint Patrick,

According to credible reports that have reached this office, you have been involved in the export (“banishing”) of snakes (reptiles of the suborder Serpentes) from Ireland. We are unable to find an export permit on file for these animals. As you are no doubt aware, a permit is required for the export of wild animals from Ireland.

In addition, several species of snakes are on the European Red List. These include the Milos viper, *Macrovipera schweizeri* (threatened); Lataste’s Viper, *Vipera latastei* (vulnerable); and Orsini’s Viper, *Vipera ursinii* (vulnerable). Intentional interference with these animals, including capturing, harassing, or export, is a serious offense. Since your act of “banishing the snakes from Ireland,” biological surveys have revealed no evidence of any remaining specimens in Ireland.

These actions have serious environmental consequences. Like many people, you may have little understanding of the ecological role played by snakes. Snakes provide food for some predators such as birds of prey, while they themselves prey on small animals such as rodents. Removing snakes from the ecological web can have serious, and often unforeseeable, ecological impacts.

Eliminating snakes from Ireland threatens an explosion in rodent species upon which the snakes prey. This could have devastating consequences for Irish farmers. As you know, the potato will not be introduced into Ireland for several centuries, leaving the Irish food supply especially precarious at present.

The impact within Ireland is serious enough but we must also express our alarm at their introduction as invasive species in other countries. The Roman authorities in Britain are reporting numerous examples of snake bites and the decimation of many small animals by escaped snakes. There have also been reports of snake bites in areas where venomous snakes were previously rare.

Given the close connection of your name with the color green, we find the distinctly “un-

Green” implications of your actions particularly disturbing. Shouldn’t you have thought about this before taking such drastic action?

We invite you to meet with us within the next week in order to discuss possible remedies for your actions. Failure to do so may result in serious criminal or civil penalties.

Your truly,

Minister Eamon Ryan