Deborah Ponder
Original Paintings and Fine Art Prints
812 Chance Court
Street, MD 21154

22 July 2015

To whom it may concern:

I am vehemently opposed to the 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Act now being considered by Congress.

I have been a professional, working artist and art instructor for the past 35+ years, and it is only because of fair, effective copyright laws that acknowledge and protect my exclusive ownership of my unique works of art that I have been able to earn an income.

My paintings are my unique creations and intellectual property. More importantly, they are my “product,” and collectively they are my “inventory”, equivalent to those of any other type of business. I earn income…

1) from sales of my original paintings to clients through art galleries and my website;
2) through international publication and sales of posters and fine art prints of my paintings;
3) through business contracts for licensing images of my paintings to national and international companies that publish printed materials or produce decorative and functional goods for the home;
4) by conducting workshops for artists.

In light of the content of the proposed new law, I want to point out that a great number of my works of art have maintained their commercial value and viability for many, many years. Indeed, instead of losing their value after initial publication and becoming what some would call “orphans”, these paintings and/or images have remained in demand long after I first created them. They have gotten me licensing contracts. They have driven sales of my other works of art. They have served as sales tools to promote my workshops to artists. They have become iconic elements of my personal brand recognition.

This is why I should be able to continue to have automatic copyright (free of commercial registries), sole ownership and exclusive control of MY artwork. I alone should be free to determine voluntarily how and by whom MY works of art and images of them are used, because this is the basis of my business.

It is no more the public's right to use or digitize my art work— MY business product and inventory— than it is for someone to sell “knock-offs” of designer handbags or NFL team merchandise without permission from and compensation to the originator of those products.

The Internet already has made it difficult for me to track others who have stolen images of my artworks and reproduced them for their own profit, without my permission and without compensating me. If passed, the proposed new copyright law will open a

floodgate of plagiarism and theft. I am especially outraged that the proposed new copyright law would allow others to alter my personal artwork and copyright "derivative works" in their own names!

For a professional artist like me, fair, effective, protective copyright law is vital to my business and my ability to make a living. The 2015 Orphan Works and Mass Digitization Act MUST NOT be passed into law.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ponder, Artist Owner
Deborah Ponder Original Paintings and Fine Art Prints

Member American Watercolor Society, Baltimore Watercolor Society, Harford Artists Association, National Watercolor Society, Northeast Watercolor Society