Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

RE: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

Dear Ms. Pallante and the Copyright Office Staff:

I am an artist and freelance illustrator by trade. As a freelance illustrator, my income heavily relies on my drawing skills and my inherent copyrights once my images are created. Selling these rights and licensing them is how I am able to bring in an income and feed my family. It is because of this that I am writing to you: copyright is my income. Laws changing these rules about my given right as a creator to an image is not an abstract thought to be discussed in an office, but a real game changer for my livelihood.

One of the things that worries me the most about these proposed changes is that my images are ALL digitally created. As many pains as an artist can take to include a watermark and meta data in our images for online display, there are a billion ways for that information to be removed from our images simply by having others even share it online, or resave images, or entirely strip the image of its metadata. Although my clients do credit my images for publication purposes, this is only ONE of the many venues where my work can be seen, which means that I do not have control over how far and wide my images are shared and they could easily be “orphaned” as per your new proposed law. The only way for me to solve this is to not show my work at all, and if I don’t show my work, then I cannot make a living from it.

If your intention is to really protect the rights of artists and creators, instead of trying to orphan our works and make it even easier yet to have our rights as workers exploited by those who would like to make a buck off of us, perhaps you should work to strengthen the rules that give US creators more protection, like making it illegal to mass digitize works not in the public domain records, illegal to remove copyright information, and extending the copyright of an artist even if it has not been registered, and allowing artists to register work without having to pay a fee every time — after all, artists don’t make much money as is, and you’re hoping to force us to register every image? — no artwork can create itself, it is created by someone, and therefore it is not an orphaned work. This proposed change is hugely worrisome, Please help us continue working (and therefore providing more income for the economy we live in) by protecting our rights, not just selling them off to the highest bidder.

Sincerely,

Jael Bendt
D.B.A Jay Bendt

Minnesota, MN, 55337