U.S. Copyright Office Notice of Inquiry Comments from Photographer Matt Timmons

- INFINGEMENT LAWSUITS
  Infringed photographs, once registered, should be eligible for statutory damages plus attorney fees in addition to actual damages in all infringement settlements regardless of publication status. Corporations are purposely stealing published images because they know photographers have little chance of being able to afford litigation when only actual damages are available in a lawsuit. Many law firms won't even represent a photographer when only actual damages are available. This actually *encourages* businesses to steal photographs simply because the practicality of the law works in their favor. This has to stop- image creators need to be protected to the fullest extent against infringers in all cases.

- PUBLISHED IMAGES
  The definition of "Published" in terms of photography needs to be universally definable and understandable. Published photography should be defined as when an image creator places any image(s) of his creation onto any platform for full, unrestricted public access and viewing, or distributes image(s) to a second party for the purpose of placement in full, unrestricted public view. If the creator places an image into a limited public viewership, such as those with restrictions or limited access to the image(s), (i.e. a social media website with access only to authorized "friends" or websites with membership-only access) then it should not be considered published.

- REGISTRATION SMARTPHONE APP
  Since so much photography these days is done with smart phones, the Copyright Office should have a Smartphone Registration Application ("App"), which allows the user to add smartphone photos to a queue, which then are uploaded to a user's database at the Copyright Office for registration on a scheduled basis with the registration fee deducted from the user's credit or debit card. This way, a user can take as many photos as they wish, send them to the app which re-sizes them for upload, have a user template with most of the registration information already filled out and every 3 months (or whenever the user desires) the App can upload all the images to the users' copyright database, the fee charged and the images registered. This would allow users to shoot photos and video on their phone, upload it to the Internet and still know that as long as they use the App, their photos will be registered in a timely manner. Users would be able to have all of their phone photos and video registered and protected in about as much time as it takes to upload them to a social media site and pay one registration fee for all their photos in a 3-month time period, or however often they wish.

- COPYRIGHT INFORMATION PLATFORM
  There needs to be easier access to copyright education and information for photographers on the Copyright.gov website. As it is currently, it takes a lawyer to explain copyright's policies and there is far too much false and misleading information on the Internet that photographers confuse as fact. Topics such as Fair Use are so widely misunderstood that it is absolutely essential to have a centralized, easy to understand resource for photography copyright information. This should include a public question/answer forum for registered users that is moderated by Copyright Office personnel much the same way a software manufacturer has forums for it's customers.