Hello, my name is Amanda Zimmerman and I am a professional illustrator and artist. I specialize in creating educational and informative illustrations about our natural world and its inhabitants for the general public, scientists and teachers. These works I have created are used in textbooks, museums, zoos, classrooms and, yes, on the Internet. My work, and the work of my colleagues, is vital in visually presenting scientific information accessible for learning and expanding our knowledge of the world.

I have owned my own illustration business for over 5 years. I work long hours at my drawing table to create these illustrations. I love it with a passion.

Illustrations are learning tools that reach across language, educational and cultural barriers to get a concept or message across. I draw on my art and science backgrounds to develop images that are accurate and easy to understand and remember.

Illustrating is not a hobby I do in my spare time. I studied and graduated from the Colorado Institute of Art and continued my education through specialized certified scientific illustration programs to hone my skills on interpretation and execution. I've worked with scientific researchers and experts from all over the world. My work has been honored in the New York State Museum's "Focus on Nature" exhibit and in the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators annual show. I have been a member of Pittsburgh society of Illustrators for over 8 years.

Behind every illustration I do is hours of research and planning. I must work closely with the experts to ensure I am presenting the information correctly. Whether I am illustrating the shifting of the earth's plates, the life cycle of a flower or a detailed illustration of a species for a field guide, each illustration must go through a series of corrections and edits before I can begin work on the final.

Every illustration I create has the potential to continue to earn money as I can repurpose it to use in a textbook or other publication beyond its original purpose. For example, I might illustrate a moth for a textbook section on insect life cycles that can also be licensed for use in a field guide on moths and butterflies. I also have exclusive rights to create derivative works from my own collection of images for consistent quality of my work. Specialists or organizations can license the illustrations through me, the copyright owner/creator. This way I can control where, how, and by whom my work is used. My library of copyrighted illustrations is a resource of income through licensing.

In a field as medical and scientific illustration, having copyright protection of my work is essential. Copyright is the basis on which my business rests. In order to work with more experts and to help more individuals, I have to be able to protect my work and be acknowledged as the specialized artist who has the experience and expertise to create educational illustrations.

Having copyright infringement is like stealing money and intellectual property. My work takes hours to research, develop, and create. I find it unfair that someone can simply take my finished artwork, claim it as theirs, and begin to generate profit without any credit or acknowledgement given just because they couldn't find me as the original artist.

To the best of my knowledge, most of the people I worked with are honest, understanding, and respectful of my work. Having the layer of copyright protection helps me propel forward to expand my business using the digital tools available today.

The current copyright law protects me as an artist and gives me a way to make a living creating artwork that will help others further their own education. I understand that there is value in educational illustration, and they can be prone to theft/copyright infringement. That is why I am very concerned about the current discussion about the new draft of the US Copyright Act.

If I am not able to protect my work and have control of my work, I will no longer be able to support myself as a professional artist.

Thank you for your consideration for keeping the current copyright law to protect hundreds and thousands of artists like me.

Sincerely,

Amanda Zimmerman