RE: Return of Orphan Works, The Next Great Copyright Act

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lynne Wirthlin. I am a visual artist with 25 years experience in the art industry. My college degree is in Visual Communication. Over the years my artwork has been published in several magazines. My artwork is the product I license and sell to make a living. Because of our great copyright laws as they stand, I retain first rights to my product to this day. No one makes money off of my product. It belongs solely to me. They did not work for it, pay for it, or earn it in any way. Yet this prosed bill will anyone the right to take what belongs to me and use it for his or her own profit? Absurd. Why would I give my product away without return on my investment? This same copyright principle applies to any product sold in the marketplace, why only target visual artists? Would a business entrepreneur of sound mind give away his product to the public? A free handout? And then allow that product to be reproduced without protecting his copyright on that product? The question is unthinkable in a free enterprising nation, let alone that it were the law. The copyright law for visual artists, as it stands now, protects us from this exact thing. By this proposed copyright law the visual artists' product becomes a 'free-for-all', anyone can take what's rightfully ours and use it to make money for him or herself. This is the definition of stealing.

For me, this copyright law is not an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which my business rests. My copyright is the product I license. Infringing on my work is stealing my money. It's critical to all visual artists and their businesses that we remain able to determine voluntarily how and by whom our work is used. Our work does NOT lose its value upon publication. Instead everything we create becomes part of our business inventory. In the digital era, inventory is more valuable to artists than ever before.

In conclusion, I am OPPOSED to this Next *not*-Great Copyright Act. DO NOT pass this through. DO NOT take this freedom away from us!

Thank you,
Lynne Wirthlin