L. S. Eldridge, AWS, MSW, PWS
3507 Mockingbird Lane
Rogers, Arkansas 72756
(479) 621-8054
lse123a@gmail.com

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U. S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000
(877) 476-0778 (toll free)

Submitted at: http://copyright.gov/policy/visualworks/comment-form/

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing concerning proposed reforms to the US Copyright laws that will affect visual artists. I am particularly addressing the subject of "orphan works", commercial registries, and "good faith" infringement. I am adamantly opposed to these proposed changes and believe that I should continue to have automatic copyright and sole ownership of my art.

I studied commercial art for four years, and am at a point in my life where I am actively seeking a reputation in the fine arts. My work has been published in Splash 15, and Splash 16 and in Watercolor Artist magazine. I have received awards from the American Watercolor Society, the Pennsylvania Watercolor Society, and the Mid-Southern Watercolorists. My work has been displayed in galleries, museums and venues across my state and country. For me this is not an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which I plan my future. It is blatantly untrue that once my work has been published it has no further commercial value. In fact the opposite is true. For visual artists the original is just the starting point. It is upon publication that a visual artist's work gains *more* value. After publication there is an enormous opportunity for secondary products, for example: giclees, notecards, cell phone covers, tennis shoes, clothing, car wraps, wrapping paper, pencils, key-chains, calendars, billboards etc., etc. Walk into any business and you will see the opportunities for secondary products for living artists. Our copyrights are the products we license and thus it is singularly important that we remain able to determine how, and by whom, our work is used.

Publication of my work is part of gaining my reputation as an artist. If I don't publicize my work, I will never have any artistic opportunities at all. So allowing infringement on my work is in fact condoned theft: theft of my future, my dreams, and my ability to make a living from my own creation. It is infeasible that I should

lose exclusive control of my work. To allow others to alter my paintings and copyright these "derivative works" in their own names is theft. There is no other word for it.

The proposed copyright changes will limit my artwork to a one-time opportunity. This is untenable as each piece takes me anywhere from 240-280 hours to complete. Everything I create builds toward my future and digitizing my work has become more valuable than ever before. The proposed changes to the U.S. copyright laws will crush my future earning ability. Even though I might still be considered a hobbyist, I am building a reputation. I would not welcome some entity or stranger monetizing my work for their own profit without my knowledge or consent.

I am also deeply concerned about the added expense and uncertainty of registering my work with a commercial registry. By doing so I fear they will become the worst infringers of my artwork. I will be pressured to use one or more commercial entities, which can then turn around and legally infringe on my work. The expense of registering is already a problem. This added cost and uncertainty makes it exponentially worse.

I am adamantly opposed to the proposed changes to the US copyright law. It is clear they were written for large corporate interests only.

Sincerely,

L. S. Eldridge, AWS, MSW, PWS

Cc: The Honorable John Boozman, United States Senate;
The Honorable Tom Cotton, United States Senate; and
The Honorable Steve Womack, House of Representatives.