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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:

Thank you for opening up comment on you inquiry on protecting Visual Works under a new copyright law.
I am a scientific illustrator from the Netherlands and have been so for 12 years. I have a masters in animal science at the Wageningen University and have worked for national and international clients like Science Magazine, The Dutch TNO, universities from all over the world and many more.
Given my background, I can tackle a lot of scientific subjects, but my specialty is within the life sciences.

And most of my colleagues live in the United States.

What has been going on regarding legislation of the copyright law is been very worrying, not only for my American colleagues, but also for illustrators like me who have an audience that doesn't stop at the border from the Netherlands but is worldwide.

Although a lot of my work is very specialized, a part is re-usable and, since I live in the Netherlands, I don't have to worry about who owns the copyright to my work. Because that is me. And it will stay that way until I decide otherwise. That is how the law is in the Netherlands.

We also have an organization called Pictoright. Illustrators, photographers and other artists can become members. Every year Pictoright gives them a payment on work re-used by businesses, libraries, government departments, etcetera. For a lot of people over here this is a big source of income.
But we as arists are also re-selling our work over here as a concurrent source of income.

If someone in the states uses my work without permission I can send a bill and be completely in my right. I am afraid that if this new law is put into place it will make getting what is legally mine a lot harder.
In this day and age borders aren't that definitive especcially with art. Making this law happen will also make it harder to defend our right to earn a living by making art: if the work I make is considered to be used by anyone who wants to, I am out of business.

Given my line of work, I am an illustrator who makes work that is meant to explain things in the first place, it has to be first and foremost accurate. Since it is serving and doesn't stand alone, I normally don't sign the work. That means that if someone sees it in another country in another setting and doesn't take the effort to search who made it, it will be all too easy to consider my work orphan.

Unfortunately English isn't my mother tongue, so I can't express completely what I want to say, but I hope this letter will contribute to an insight of what it means to be a scientific illustrator and earn a living with my work.

Sincerely,

Mieke Roth