Dear Copyright Office,

I have been a professional illustrator and artist for nearly ten years, since starting my business at the age of 20. I attended Stanford University hoping to be a scientist, but changed my mind when I realized that science needed individuals who understood its processes to visualize and share the information. I have had the privilege since of attending the University of Washington Graduate Certificate Program for Science Illustration and gaining my Masters in Biological and Medical Art at Johns Hopkins University. Along the way I studied with many artists, especially at the community based Atelier school Gage Academy of Art in Seattle.

I have worked very hard to get to where I am, an independent business owner producing art in the form of traditional and digital illustration, animation, sculpture, and even interactive applications. I feel lucky that in my work I actually create new products every day, while providing a communication service to my clients.

I have worked for National Geographic, the Smithsonian, the National Zoo and Aquarium, neurosurgeons, molecular researchers, archaeologists, paleontologists, and magazines, and am an award winning artist in both the medical and biological fields.

To continue to serve my clients, and run my business, it is important that I maintain copyright to my works so that I may repurpose them in my future art, and make a living. I often find my own art stolen and changed on the internet, sometimes for sale by others. My work, though often digital, is a product of my labor, literally the fruit of many hours of education and creative work. Stealing it and profiting from it, either by advertising, or (as has happened to me numerous times) in actual sales.

It is important to me and to all working artists that we continue to maintain copyright to all images, even when they are stolen and bastardized or displayed with signatures removed. My work and the work of others need to maintain ownership of our products to continue our business, which like any other service or product adds value to those who commission it, license it, view or use it. My artwork does not lose value on publication, but can be licensed again to future clients, and as the digital world grows, my inventory of work is one of my most valuable assets.

Please do not pass the new copyright legislation, as it only benefits large internet firms who would take my product inventory and use it for their own profit. Putting the burden of proof on me, the independent creator vs. the massive legal teams of such corporations makes my business suffer, since as an independent artist I have learned to serve as bookkeeper, accountant, advertising and marketing department, tech support, and now legal team.

This is very dangerous legislation, and I urge you to strike it down.

Sincerely,

Mesa Schumacher