July 22, 2015

Dear Sirs/Madame

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my comments regarding the new recommendations that will negatively impact our current Copyright protections of Visual Art.

I have been a professional artist for 30 years. For the past 25, my entire source of income has been the creation of my oil paintings and the reproduction/sale of the original works in limited edition print form and by making the images available for publication in other applications. My work does NOT lose its value upon publication. Instead everything I create becomes part of my business inventory. In the digital era, inventory is more valuable to artists than ever before.

Copyright law is not an abstract legal issue, but the basis on which my business rests. Our copyrights are the products we license. This means that infringing my work is in essence stealing my income. It's important to my business and the livelihood of my family that we remain able to determine voluntarily how and by whom our work is used.

The new legislation or new copyright provisions will not only adversely and irrevocably harm my ability and business to operate as an artist but will also devalue my work, both original works and reproductions, that have been purchased over the years by my customers.

I already battle weak overseas laws that allow for the pirating of my works, please don't make it easier for organizations and individuals to do this here in the United States.

Thank you once again for allowing me to share my views and I hope that you will continue to protect the creative, and economic rights of millions of American artists. Our livelihoods depend on your protection!

Sincerely,

Rick Herter, Artist