Hi,

I am a licensing artist and have concerns about the proposed copyright legislation. I create patterns and illustrations specifically for licensing to manufacturers to reproduce on products ranging from rugs, dishes, wrapping paper, fabric, pillows, luggage... you name it. If you walk into a store and see a product with an image on it, that image has mostly likely been licensed from an artist like me. This entire industry relies on copyrighted images.

There definitely needs to be some changes to copyright law. But the changes need to PROTECT ARTISTS MORE not open them up to the possibilities of large corporations encroaching on their rights. It's already hard enough to keep people from stealing my imagery.

I'm particularly concerned with the orphaned works part of the new legislation. It just seems stacked against artists. Terms like "good faith diligent searches" to find the owner of the orphaned works seems vague and unenforceable. If someone sees an image, makes a few attempts at an internet search to find the owner, should they be allowed to reproduce that image on the products I named above? If that is the case then it will put me out of business.

The artwork I create is original, proprietary and the only product I have to sell. No one else should have any right to use it unless I give them specific permission and am compensated accordingly.

Time does not de-value my art. I have images that I licensed to manufacturers years ago and can continue to license them to other manufacturers for years to come. If images become so easily orphaned because of the nature of the internet, then they WILL truly be de-valued because no manufacturer will agree to pay me for work they can get for free.

Registering copyright for everything that I create would be too burdensome. I create hundreds of images each year. Some may never be chosen for licensing and therefore never generate any income. But some will generate lots of income as long as the copyright is exclusive to me. It would be amazingly time-consuming, expensive and impractical for me to register everything I produce.

Please be very careful how you proceed with this legislation. Our constitution is founded on the rights of individuals, not on what's good for corporate interests. The current proposal seriously limits my rights to own and profit from the things that I create. And could put me out of business.

Thanks for your consideration.

Kris Ruff