23 July 2015,

RE: Notice of Inquiry, Copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works (Docket No. 2015-01)

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for allowing artists to comment on the upcoming copyright legislation. I appreciate you taking the time to read my thoughts on this subject as this proposal would very negatively impact my livelihood and those of countless other visual creators throughout the world. I have been a freelance illustrator for the past nine years for a diverse range of clients including book publishers, magazines, games, and museums. This is a topic of immense importance to me because my images are the product of years and years of training, tens of thousands of dollars spent on schooling, and hundreds of thousands of hours of hard work.

Upon graduating with a BA from the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford, I was thrust out into the incredibly challenging and increasingly competitive professional art world. Determined to pursue my dream of working as a full-time freelance artist, I struggled and persisted for several years to achieve my goals while many of my peers were unable to cope with the hard work, and eventually turned to regular jobs. I have happily been able to do a job that I love for the past number of years, even though rates have not raised and in some cases gotten lower. Additionally, current copyright law has made it easier for many companies to bully artists into agreeing to unfair contracts. Working as a freelance artist also means that I do not receive any benefits from an employer and often have to pay higher self-employment taxes. But despite some of these setbacks, this remains a career that I would not trade for the world. It is what I love to do, and I don't not know where I would go if creating art was no longer a viable option.

Allowing the proposed copyright reform to pass would make my job nearly obsolete. If you are aware of the rate at which images are shared and spread throughout the internet currently through social media, then you know that once an image is posted anywhere, it is almost uncontrollable as to where or how it ends up. This has been both wonderful and terrible at the same time. It has made exposure to a world-wide audience much easier than ever before. This helps my business by generating a fan base that is interested in purchasing original artwork, prints, or any other material I wish to sell to maintain my livelihood. It also generates clients that will commission me to create custom artwork for their products or publications. Under current copyright law, I do not have to worry too much about whether my artwork will be taken and used illegally by a third-party because I have creators rights to those works. Though it does happen occasionally, the current law helps to clear up these issues usually fairly quickly. However, if the new reform takes place, then I fear that many of my images can and will be taken and used to generate money without me, the person who spent countless hours creating it, benefitting from those transactions. Furthermore, I will no longer have the protection of the law to keep this from happening. Clients would no longer contact me or any other artists to create new works for a fee when they can take any “orphan works” from the internet. Thus leaving me without any income, and without a means to continue working in a job that I love.

I encourage you to consider the greater effects this reform will have on me and the various other artists throughout the world. If we allow corporations to control and dictate every aspect of life through their use of power and money, then we will be left with no more individuality in our society. As an individual, I am writing with the hope that you, a member of the government of the United States of America, will think of all of us little people who make the world more visually interesting, and respect

our rights to protect our images, our souls.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Scott Murphy
www.murphyillustration.com