

Dearest U.S. Copyright Office,\

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My name is Melanie Holland Greco. I am a songwriter, recording artist, and music business administrator. I'm thirty six years old, have experienced the business before and after the "digital revolution", and from many sides. I have studied, learned, earned, and accounted for many musical revenue streams over the years including performance and mechanical publishing and writers' royalties.\

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I'm sure you are getting many responses to your inquiry. Thank you for asking the public for comments. I'm opting for a casual approach, so that my points will be easy to read and understand. I hope that these points help to further stir your interest in amending the copyright law to better compensate and value the contributions of people whose work is joyfully consumed through music and video streaming.\

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I mainly want to shed light on the issues of the songwriters, the central members of the hit writing & performing teams, and their lost revenue streams. It is widely known and accepted that the song itself is more important, more valuable, more marketable than the recording artist themselves. Unlike musicians, who are paid upfront for their work on a recorded song (and make performance royalties through SoundExchange), songwriters rely on their royalties to make money. \

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Artists, songwriters, and publishers need for the copyright law to establish a fair per-stream rate for their works. The copyright law previously had this covered with the mechanical royalty rate (generally 9.1 cents per song), payable to the songwriter and publisher, on sales. The song could be sold as a single or as part of an album, and the writers / publishers would share this royalty. Unfortunately this lawful payment does not apply in the streaming world, and that's what needs to be adjusted.\

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You see, songwriters, particularly of big, valuable, hit songs do not necessarily tour. THE RECORDED HIT VERSION OF A SONG IS THE

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\b0 product of the entire music industry. THAT is the magic element that allows all of the rest of an artist's career to flourish. It is NOT an advertisement, although it can function as one, THE HIT is incredibly valuable and the SONGWRITERS of those works must be paid. \

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I'm referring to people who wrote songs that you and your family all know like Diane Warren, Michael Masser, Lamont Dozier, Kara Dioguardi, and Burt Bacharach to name a few. There are also so very many people whom we've never heard of, but whom spend their lives working on their crafts, and creating very high quality works. Formerly these songwriters could be certain that if a major artist recorded one of their songs and had a hit with it, that they would be fairly compensated and have an opportunity to make a living.\

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Streaming service platforms like Spotify, Deezer, Beats, etc. would be of no value if not for the wealth of content within. So why are major artists on these sites if the payments are not fair? I believe it's because their labels have negotiated special deals for the per-stream payouts with relation to the master recordings that they own. Generally the master owner is the party who paid for the recording, not the person(s) who wrote the song or made the art, thus further benefitting the person who already has capital - the investor and not the creator. Non-disclosure agreements are keeping the terms of these deals secret, making it impossible for the rest of the industry to know where the money is going. Furthermore these companies hold stock in the streaming services, so their financial bases are covered. They don't have a serious financial interest in protecting their artists' livelihoods. Additionally, the songwriters are again left out in the cold under these circumstances.\

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Another issue is that technological platforms are not re-investing in content. Traditionally labels would make the lion's share of the income, but they also invested in new talent - new songwriters, new artists, etc.. Thus, they would be employing graphic designers, engineers, recording studios, and feeding the creative network so that it could continue to strive for greatness. Streaming services and technological giants like Google and Apple, who absolutely want to make money from recorded music, are neither reinvesting in the creation of new works nor compensating the creators of the works whom they're already making money from.\

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SPOTIFY now has 10 million subscribers world wide. This is the equivalent of one band or BRAND having an RIAA certified diamond record once a month. <http://www.billboard.com/biz/articles/news/digital-and-mobile/6092226/spotify-now-has-10-million-paid-subscribers-3-million>. \

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GOOGLE's YOUTUBE is bullying independent labels to sign their deals for low - no payment or be blocked from the service <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/may/22/indie-labels-youtube-subscription-music>. And their payments are atrociously low even for major artists\85 they're paying pennies, and collecting big dollars from advertisers. I administrate for a famous recording artist and composer's catalog and have seen the checks.\

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We are artists. We are people who have dedicated our lives to purveying matters the heart. There are no guarantees in this business. We only want what is fair and the possibility of making a living from our works once and if they become popular and treasured by individuals and the culture at large.\

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In conclusion, streaming music and videos is an incredible technological breakthrough. The Internet has created the coolest, hugest, on-demand jukebox that the world has ever known. I think that the payment terms are absolutely fix-able. I believe that a fair, mutually wonderful solution can be reached, and I am very thankful that the US Copyright Office is looking into this topic, so that the resolution will be expedited. \

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Thank you so much for your time and for accepting and reading this letter.\

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Very best wishes,\

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Holland Greco\

BMI Songwriter\

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Citizen of the USA and believer in artist rights and fair, amicable, and equitable solutions for all\