

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty](mailto:FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty)  
**Cc:** [info@copyrightalliance.org](mailto:info@copyrightalliance.org)  
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The Copyright Alliance has informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.

I am a photographer in Los Angeles, and I make my entire livelihood from my creativity and the value of the intellectual property that I create. In recent years the Internet has made it vastly easier to appropriate (i.e., steal) images made by others. In fact, the incredible ease of this has created a broad cultural sense that it is OK -- that it is even a right -- to take and use images to which one has licensed no rights. This erodes the value of the intellectual property that I and other photographers and all artists create, and quite literally steals from us and lowers our income, much of which is a struggle to get in the first place.

If this trend continues, artists and creative people will no longer be able to make a living from their work, and the U.S. will no longer be a nation where innovation and creativity thrive. In a world where labor is cheaply outsourced abroad, one of the few things that makes us as a country stand out is our creativity, our culture of innovation. We are the taste-makers of the world, and this is due largely to the protection the law offers those who create intellectual property.

PLEASE fight the Orphan Works proposals that have repeatedly surfaced in Congress in recent years. Please enforce intellectual property laws and fight efforts that seek to undermine them. Please fight efforts that seek to grant popular ownership of intellectual property created by individuals and companies. Please fight piracy and theft.

Thank you.

Ethan Pines, photographer  
Los Angeles, CA