

December 6, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives:

On behalf of the artists, songwriters, musicians, producers, engineers and millions of fans that have made American Country and Gospel music such a vital and important part of our society and culture, we write you today to urge your strong support for H.R. 3261, the Stop Online Piracy Act. The Stop Online Piracy Act was introduced on October 26th by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith and has 20 additional cosponsors including the Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee John Conyers, IP Subcommittee Chairman Bob Goodlatte and IP Ranking Member Mel Watt.

There are few art forms that provide a more compelling narrative of America than Country and Gospel music. According to the Country Music Association (CMA), 42% of Americans - or about 94.8 million people, are Country fans. According to the Gospel Music Association, over 56 million units of Christian/Gospel music are sold each year, touching hundreds of millions of fans worldwide. U.S. artists, from legends such as Willie Nelson, Michael W. Smith, Alabama and Steven Curtis Chapman, to newer stars like Brad Paisley, Chris Tomlin, Josh Groban, Jeremy Camp and Taylor Swift, make Country and Gospel music one of America's top artistic exports.

We are embracing new technologies and constantly seeking innovative platforms to deliver great music to our fans. However, the rampant increase of online piracy has taken a huge toll on Country and Gospel music and threatens the future of these great American art forms. The U.S. music industry has suffered 20% declines in revenue every year for the last five years almost entirely due to piracy, and according to the Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI), a decade ago there were three times the number of American songwriters making a living at their craft.

Online piracy has become a sophisticated, global business often led by criminal syndicates that evade U.S. laws by operating offshore. They depend on legitimate U.S. entities such as our search engines, credit card companies, ad service networks and ISPs to exploit millions of (often unaware) consumers. The Stop Online Piracy Act takes a comprehensive approach to this growing problem by allowing U.S. law enforcement to seek a court order to cut off the ability of clearly illicit website operators to use the U.S. market to support criminal activity.

The time to act is now. The Stop Online Piracy Act has strong bipartisan support and brings together every aspect of the Country and Gospel music community. We strongly urge your

support for this important legislation and would welcome any opportunity to discuss it with you further.

Sincerely,

Capitol Records Nashville

Christian Music Trade Association

Church Music Publishers' Association

Country Music Association

Country Music Television

EMI Christian Music Group

Lost Highway Records

Gospel Music Association

MCA Records

Mercury Nashville

Provident Music Group

Republic Nashville

Showdog Universal Music

Sony Music Nashville

UMG Publishing Group Nashville

Warner Music Nashville

Word Entertainment