

Mr. John T. Morton
Director, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Morton:

I am writing in my role as the President of the American Association of Independent Music (A2IM; www.a2im.org) the not-for-profit trade organization that represents a broad coalition of independent music labels, a sector that comprises more than 30 percent of the music industry's U.S. recorded music sales market, including almost 40 percent of digital sales, and well over 80 percent of all music label releases in the U.S. A2IM's music label community includes music companies of all sizes throughout the United States, from Hawaii to Florida, representing musical genres as diverse as our membership. All of our members would be considered small and medium sized enterprises and all of our label members have one thing in common; **they are small business people with a love for music who are trying to make a living.** But most of our members do not have the financial resources to spend our time playing internet cop under the current copyright infringement "whack-a-mole" market situation instead of using our resources as independent creators to continue to invest in music creation.

On behalf of our members, and other music creators, we would like to thank you and applaud your ongoing efforts to reduce online piracy! The actions you have taken through "Operation In Our Sites" helps protect the investments our members are making in their artist's creation of intellectual property so all members of our community can earn an appropriate reward for their work and be able to sustain their business efforts. Our original press statement issued on November 29th is below.

Investment in artists by independent music labels goes a long way toward creating great music for fans as our community plays a vital role in the continued advancement of cultural diversity and innovation in music at home and abroad. Protecting our member's rights is vital to their continuing in business, as many have been lost over the past few years. We thank you again for the important steps you have taken in response to the growing problem of online piracy. If there is anything we can do to assist your efforts in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Rich Bengloff
President
American Association of Independent Music ("A2IM")

cc: The Honorable Janet A. Napolitano
The Honorable Eric H. Holder
The Honorable Valerie B. Jarrett
Ms. Victoria A. Espinel

29 Nov 2010

[A2IM Applauds U.S. Government Actions Against Infringing Sites](#)



American Association of Independent Music ("A2IM") President Rich Bengloff's statement on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ICE division seizure of web addresses promoting on-line piracy of music and movies.

A2IM applauds the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Investigations division seizure of website addresses known for either hosting unauthorized music or films or allowing web searches for unauthorized music and films elsewhere on the internet.

A2IM's independent music label members are small business people from across the United States, who make their living by creating and supporting the music they love.

Now is a critical time for us to speak up. Intellectual property has never been more vital to our national economy and job creation, especially given the state of the manufacturing and service industries in our country.

We need to support and protect the creators of intellectual property, and those that invest in that creation, from websites that traffic in music without the permission or approval of the creators of the music, or any compensation to them for their work and investment.

Given the state of the music industry economy, and the limited resources of our members to fight piracy, we applaud government support to ensure the rights of our community are protected from the criminal actions of those who are creating websites to illegally distribute our music. This weekend's actions follow strong statements of support for Intellectual Property by President Obama's administration, most notably Vice President Biden's comments in June stating definitively that "piracy is theft", as well as the legislative support provided earlier this month by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy and his committee, which we also applaud, passing unanimously S.3804 "Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act ("COICA")" to combat web piracy.

While our members have embraced the internet and the access and direct relationships that it creates between our artists and their fans, that relationship is for legal content with fans that respect the creative process and the investment that creation entails. But without government protections these relations are undermined and the long-run investment in the creative process will be diminished. Government mandated protections from these websites that benefit solely from the illegal usage of creative works are vital first steps toward preserving our industry by

helping to defend our members' businesses and allowing American artists and creators to both earn a living and continue to invest in the creative process.

About A2IM:

A2IM is a not-for-profit trade organization serving the Independent music community as a unified voice representing a sector that comprises over 30% of the music industry's market share in the United States (and almost 40% of SoundScan digital sales). The organization represents the Independents' interests in the marketplace, in the media, on Capitol Hill, and as part of the global music community. A2IM is headquartered in New York City.

The organization's board of directors is composed of the following: Concord Music Group President Glen Barros; Sub Pop VP Business Affairs Eric Brown; tinyOGRE Entertainment COO Jim Cooperman; Epitaph General Manager Dave Hansen; Razor & Tie Executive Vice President Dan Hoffman; The Beggars Group CEO/Founder Martin Mills; Lookout Records co-owner Molly Neuman; Kill Rock Stars President Portia Sabin; Tommy Boy CEO/Founder Tom Silverman.

For more information, or to become a member, please visit www.A2IM.org
