

**Before the  
COPYRIGHT ROYALTY JUDGES  
Washington, D.C.**

_____ )		
<b>In the Matter of</b> )		
)		
<b>Distribution of the</b> )	<b>Docket No.</b> _____	
<b>2014 Satellite Royalty Funds</b> )		
_____ )		

**MOTION OF THE PHASE I PARTIES FOR  
PARTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF 2014 SATELLITE ROYALTY FUNDS**

The undersigned representatives of all the Phase I claimant categories to which Section 119 satellite royalties have been allocated in prior satellite distribution proceedings (“Phase I Parties”)<sup>1</sup> submit the following motion to the Copyright Royalty Judges (“Judges”) for partial distribution of 60% of the 2014 satellite royalty funds (the “2014 Satellite Funds”).

According to the Licensing Division of the Copyright Office, as of December 31, 2015, the amount of the 2014 Satellite Funds available for distribution totaled approximately \$80,852,241.59. Based on this amount, a 60% partial distribution of the 2014 Satellite Funds would total approximately \$48,511,344.95. The circumstances warrant a partial distribution of 60% of the 2014 Satellite Funds as soon as feasible.

**I. THE COPYRIGHT ROYALTY JUDGES HAVE AUTHORITY TO ORDER  
PRECONTROVERSY PARTIAL DISTRIBUTIONS**

Section 119 of the Copyright Act favors the early distribution of satellite royalties. *See* 17 U.S.C. § 119(b)(5)(C). Chapter 8 of the Copyright Act vests the Judges with ample statutory authority to order the precontroversy distribution of satellite royalties. In the Copyright Royalty Judges Program Technical Corrections Act, Congress amended Section 801(b)(3)(C) to clarify

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<sup>1</sup> Public Television Claimants, the Canadian Claimants, and National Public Radio, which receive Phase I shares of cable royalties, do not claim Phase I shares of the satellite royalty funds.

that a partial distribution of royalties can be made at any time after the filing of claims. *See* Pub. L. No. 109-303 §§ 3, 5, 109th Cong., 2nd Sess. (2006), 120 Stat. 1478. Congress reaffirmed the Judges' authority to order partial distributions of statutory royalties in advance of the declaration of a controversy. Section 801(b)(3)(C) provides:

Notwithstanding section 804(b)(8), the Copyright Royalty Judges, at any time after the filing of claims under section . . . 119 . . . may, upon motion of one or more of the claimants and after publication in the *Federal Register* of a request for responses to the motion from interested claimants, make a partial distribution of such fees, if, based upon all responses received during the 30-day period beginning on the date of such publication, the Copyright Royalty Judges conclude that no claimant entitled to receive such fees has stated a reasonable objection to the partial distribution, and all such claimants –

- (i) agree to the partial distribution;
- (ii) sign an agreement obligating them to return any excess amounts to the extent necessary to comply with the final determination on the distribution of the fees made under subparagraph (B);
- (iii) file the agreement with the Copyright Royalty Judges; and
- (iv) agree that such funds are available for distribution.

17 U.S.C. § 801(b)(3)(C).

Here, the statutorily prescribed deadline for filing claims has now passed. Furthermore, the Phase I Parties (1) agree to the partial distribution; (2) agree that the requested funds are available for distribution; (3) agree to sign the separate agreement contemplated in Section 801(b)(3)(C)(ii) obligating them to return any excess royalty amounts received, in a form to be provided by the Judges or the Copyright Office; and (4) agree to file such an agreement with the Judges or as otherwise directed.

## **II. DISTRIBUTION OF 60% OF THE 2014 SATELLITE FUNDS IS REASONABLE AND APPROPRIATE**

The Judges have consistently granted the Phase I Parties' motions for partial distributions of the annual satellite royalty funds, most recently a 60% partial distribution of the 2013 satellite royalty funds. *See Order Granting Motion of Phase I Claimants for Partial Distribution of 2013 Satellite Royalty Funds*, Docket No. 14-CRB-0011 SD (2013) (May 28, 2015) (finding requested 60% partial distribution to be "reasonable and appropriate"); *see also Order Granting Motion of Phase I Claimants for Partial Distribution of 2012 Satellite Royalty Funds*, Docket No. 14-CRB-0008 SD (2010-2012) (finding requested 60% distribution to be "reasonable and appropriate"); *Order Granting Phase I Claimants' Motion for Partial Distribution of 2011 Satellite Royalty Funds*, Docket No. 2012-10 CRB SD 2011 (Mar. 13, 2013) (granting Phase I Parties' request for a 50% partial distribution of the 2011 satellite funds); *Order Granting Phase I Claimants' Motion for Partial Distribution of 2010 Satellite Royalty Funds*, Docket No. 2012-5 CRB 2010 SD (Sept. 18, 2012) (granting Phase I Parties' request for a 50% partial distribution of the 2010 satellite royalty funds).

Indeed, the Copyright Office has previously determined that partial distributions well in excess of 60% were reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. *See, e.g., Order*, Docket No. 94 CARP (92-CD & 93-CD) at 2, 5 (Sept. 26, 1994) (granting motion for partial distribution of 80% of 1992 and 1993 cable royalty funds) ("September 26, 1994 Order"); *Order*, Docket No. 2000-6 CARP CD 98 (Oct. 12, 2000) (granting Phase I Parties' motion for partial distribution of 75% of the available cable royalties on deposit for the 1998 cable royalty fund and acknowledging that retention of 25% of the available royalties would suffice to resolve any outstanding controversies related to those funds); *Distribution Order*, Docket No. 2000-7 CARP SD 96-98 (Oct. 12, 2000) (granting Phase I Parties' request for partial distribution of 75% of the

available satellite royalties on deposit for the 1996, 1997, and 1998 satellite royalty funds). Thus, the Phase I Parties do not concede through this motion that a 60% distribution is the maximum partial distribution of royalties that should be made from the 2014 Satellite Funds. The Phase I Parties reserve the right to move for additional partial distributions from the 2014 Satellite Funds as may be appropriate after the nature and extent of any *bona fide* disputes come into better focus.

A partial distribution of 60% of the 2014 Satellite Funds to the Phase I Parties would ensure that they are not deprived of a substantial amount of the royalties that belong to them during a period that may be several years long. In the past, the Copyright Office has recognized that the earliest possible receipt of the maximum available royalties by copyright owners is an important objective of the Copyright Act. *See, e.g.*, September 26, 1994 Order at 2, 5 (Office distributed 80% of the 1992 and 1993 cable royalties, noting that “the intent of the law favored early distribution”); *see also Order*, Docket No. 94 CARP (92-CD & 93-CD) at 2 (Sept. 12, 1994) (“September 12 , 1994 Order”) (referring to the “overall intent of the subparagraphs in [Section 111(d)(4)] in favor of early distributions”). Accordingly, pre-proceeding distributions of satellite royalties under Section 119(b)(5)(C) may be made in circumstances where there may be a significant delay between the filing of claims and the initiation of proceedings. *See, e.g.*, September 12, 1994 Order at 2; September 26, 1994 Order at 2; *see also Order*, Docket No. 2007-3 CRB CD 2004-2005 at 3-4 (Apr. 10, 2008).

A distribution of at least 60% of the 2014 Satellite Funds would ensure that the Phase I Parties are not further deprived of a substantial amount of the royalties paid for the use of their copyrighted works. The Phase I Parties have agreed to the amount of the proposed partial distribution. Furthermore, the Phase I Parties submit that the undistributed amount, which totals

over \$32,340,896.00, along with each Party's commitment to repay any excess funds will be more than sufficient to satisfy any remaining controversies involving these funds.

Finally, because the amounts to be distributed to each Phase I Party will remain confidential, the Phase I Parties further move to have the distribution made in bulk to a common agent for all Parties. In this regard, the Phase I Parties have entered into a confidential distribution agreement with the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball ("Baseball"), agreeing that Baseball will serve as the common agent for the distribution of royalties among the individual Phase I Parties.

### **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above, the Phase I Parties respectfully request that the Judges, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 801(b)(3)(C), publish for comment in the Federal Register the proposed partial distribution of 60% of the royalties contained in the 2014 Satellite Funds, and thereafter grant this Motion and order a 60% partial distribution of the 2014 Satellite Funds to the Phase I Parties as soon as feasible.

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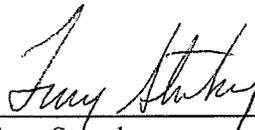
Dated: March 11, 2016

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this 11th day of March, 2016, a copy of the foregoing Joint Motion of Phase I Claimants for Partial Distribution of the 2014 Satellite Royalty Funds was sent by Federal Express to the following:

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