

**From:** Geoff Steele <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 8, 2019 5:24 PM  
**To:** ATR-LitIII-Information (ATR) <ATR.LitIII.Information@ATR.USDOJ.gov>  
**Subject:** Anti-trust Consent Decrees

To Whom It May Concern,

I am with a 93 year old, 501c-3 theatre that has been an integral part of the revitalization of a downtown urban renewal in Springfield Missouri.

I write to express my strong opposition to any change to the Antitrust Consent Decrees that have regulated the Performing Rights Organizations (PROs), including Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) and the American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) since the early 1940s.

I absolutely support the right of creators and artist to be compensated for their work, and the performance of their work, but it must be reasonable. This is a cash grab, pure and simple. It would cause irreparable harm to the music industry, especially the nonprofit sector.

The termination of the Consent Decrees would allow PROs to significantly increase rates without any judicial or DOJ oversight. It would also allow the PROs to charge different fees to similar presenters. It would give the PROs the ability to decline licenses, in effect giving PROs control over which acts are available to specific communities nationwide. This seems contrary to free market, and very undemocratic, and plainly un-American.

BMI is in the Rate Court right now requesting the addition to their licensing fees of ancillary incomes from hospitality and other services that have nothing whatsoever to do with the creation or performance of music and art. Although we do not know how the Rate Court will decide this issue, without judicial oversight under the Consent Decrees, it will be much easier for the PROs to pursue these claims.

I would further encourage a closer examination to the collection and distribution methods for the PROs in how they actually distribute funds collected to the appropriate artists. But the highest priority is addressing this clear cash grab who operate with flagrant disregard for the venues who work to be compliant and support the authentic creative community.

I emphatically encourage the Consent Decrees be kept in place.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
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