

From: Jonathan Walser <JWa[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2019 1:35 PM
To: ATR-LitIII-Information (ATR) <ATR.LitIII.Information@ATR.USDOJ.gov>
Subject: Advocate on behalf of Ruth Eckerd Hall. BMI and ASCAP

To Whom it may Concern –

I am aware that the Performing Rights Organizations (PRO) BMI and ASCAP have requested that the U.S. Department of Justice end the Antitrust Consent Decrees which have regulated both BMI and ASCAP since the early 1940s. Removal is significantly detrimental to the viability of cultural institutions as well as on the entertainment industry as a whole. The termination of the Consent Decrees would allow these PROs to increase rates without any judicial oversight, allowing differing license fees from presenter to presenter as well as the ability to decline a license and therefore control which artists can be hired. In effect, a monopoly on the industry. The intent is to demand higher royalty fees and force access to revenue streams such as food sales, parking fees, program ads, etc. which are unrelated to the creation or performance of the art or music.

Our arts organization relies heavily on these other sources of revenue to remain viable, keep prices accessible, and reinvest back into the local community with educational programming. Ruth Eckerd Hall plays a large role in our state, having an economic impact of \$9.1M and is only one of hundreds of such arts institutions, employing thousands of people across the country serving millions of citizens who will all lose if the PROs are granted their request. We ask you to advocate on the community's behalf to maintain judicial oversight.

The Consent Decrees must remain in place.

Thank you!