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Members of the MLBA Meet Congressional Stakeholders on Copyright Reform

Licensees are looking for common ground with copyright holders' control of public performance

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, members of the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA) and Pennsylvania Beverage and Tavern Association met with Congressional staff on Capitol Hill to discuss Copyright reform. These individuals are directors of the Fairness in Music Licensing Coalition (FMLC), a non-profit association with the goal of making music fairness a part of the federal Copyright reform.

FMLC directors sat down with Congressional stakeholders on how small businesses are impacted by music licensing fees. In particular, the discussions focused on how Performing Rights Organizations (PROs) operate without adequate transparency and use high pressure tactics when they collect licensing fees.

“Each year, PROs provide bar and restaurant owners with a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ proposition, which is to pay higher rates for the music played at their establishments or face costly litigation,” says Scott Ellis, MLBA executive director and FMLC vice president of outreach and strategy. “We want to make sure that when a member pays a music licensing fee, that member knows what he or she is buying.”

FMLC is exploring how Congress can reform the Copyright Act in a way that promotes music creation without an excessively harsh payment collection system.

FMLC was created in January 2015 to simplify, modernize and clarify the Copyright Act with regards to the “Small Business Exemption”. The FMLC wants to make sure that if a music user pays a music licensing fee, then he or she can figure out what he or she is buying.

For more information, call MLBA Executive Director Scott Ellis at 800-292-2896.

The Michigan Licensed Beverage Association is a not-for-profit corporation created in 1939 by liquor licensees in the state of Michigan with the purpose of mutual improvement, protection, and benefit, therefore promoting the moral, social and intellectual advancement of the liquor licensees of the state of Michigan. For more information on the association and its activities, visit the MLBA website at www.mlba.org