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THE U.S. COPYRIGHT INDUSTRIES EXPRESS CONCERN OVER COPYRIGHT PIRACY IN THAILAND ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE U.S.-THAILAND FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), comprised of six trade associations and their over 1,350 companies representing the U.S. copyright industries, today expressed concerns over devastating copyright piracy in Thailand. “The Royal Thai Government needs to take urgent action now to begin reducing the high levels of piracy that infect this market,” said Eric Smith, President of IIPA.

The copyright industries have to date provided enthusiastic support for FTAs and the high levels of copyright protection they have contained. However, piracy in Thailand causes enormous harm to the copyright industries. To date, the Thai Government has shown little sign that it intends to pay much more than lip service to the serious piracy problem now that commencement of an FTA has been announced. The copyright community expects the highest level standards of copyright protection and enforcement obligations in Thailand as a result of any agreed-upon FTA with Thailand. We also expect that the Royal Thai Government will take concrete steps during the negotiation to fight massive over-production of pirate CDs, DVDs, and CD-ROMs; production and export of pirate cartridge-based videogames; book piracy; end-user piracy of business software; and other forms of piracy in Thailand. We urge the U.S. Government not to permit the Thai Government to use the FTA negotiations as an excuse for inaction.

“The Thai Government harbors dozens of CD plants capable of producing over 400 million discs per year – more than seven times any justifiable legitimate domestic demand. It is clear Thailand has become a major exporter of pirate discs. We simply cannot understand why Thailand, which wants to modernize its economy in the 21st century, would want to protect these blatant and organized pirates,” noted Eric H. Smith, IIPA President. “IIPA and its members look to the U.S. Government to demonstrate its strength and seek real change in Thailand, to open this market that remains closed due to piracy. The U.S. copyright industries believe this could be an historic agreement, but only if the piracy problem is addressed and the high levels of protection established in the other FTAs negotiated with our trading partners to date are achieved.”

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The IIPA is a private-sector coalition formed in 1984 to represent the U.S. copyright-based industries in bilateral and multilateral efforts to improve international protection of copyrighted materials. IIPA’s six member associations represent over 1,350 U.S. companies producing and distributing materials protected by copyright laws throughout the world – all types of computer software including business applications software and entertainment software (such as videogame CDs and cartridges, personal computer CD-ROMs and multimedia products); theatrical films, television programs, home videos and digital representations of audiovisual works; music, records, CDs, and audiocassettes; and textbooks, tradebooks, reference and professional publications and journals (in both electronic and print media).