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Music Theft at 58 Campuses Targeted in Latest Wave of Deterrence Program

WASHINGTON -- *On behalf of the major record companies, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) this week sent a new wave of 503 pre-litigation settlement letters to 58 universities nationwide.*

This new round of pre-litigation letters is the latest installment of a broad education and deterrence campaign that the RIAA launched earlier this year focused on illegal file trafficking on college campuses. This program gives students the opportunity to resolve copyright infringement claims (www.p2plawsuits.com) against them at a discounted rate before a formal lawsuit is filed. Each pre-litigation settlement letter informs the school of a forthcoming copyright infringement suit against one of its students or personnel and requests that university administrators forward that letter to the appropriate network user.

In the seventh wave of this new initiative, the RIAA this week sent letters to 58 schools including: Boston University, University of Tennessee - Knoxville, North Carolina State University, Duke University, University of Maine System, Columbia University, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Texas at Austin, Boston College, Carleton College, Georgetown University, Indiana State University, Marshall University, New York University, Tulane University, University of Virginia, Bethel University, California State University, Fresno, California State University, Sacramento, Colgate University, Emory University, Loyola University Chicago, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Mississippi, Allegheny College, Gettysburg College, Lehigh University, Seton Hall University, University of Kentucky, Washington University, Bryn Mawr College, Bucknell University, California State University, Chico, Creighton University, Florida Institute of Technology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Rice University, Texas A&M University, University of Florida, University of Notre Dame, Bowdoin College, Haverford College, Mt. Saint Mary College, Pepperdine University, San Jose State University, Smith College, Trinity College, University of Minnesota - Duluth, American University, California State University, Stanislaus, San Diego State University, University of Hawaii, Villanova University, Oberlin College, Swarthmore College, Virginia Military Institute, and Wellesley College. Because of the summer schedule, the RIAA is extending the amount of time that the recipient of a pre-litigation letter has to contact the organization's legal representatives to work out a settlement.

The ongoing initiative comes as federal lawmakers continue to hold hearings examining the state of copyright theft on college campuses nationwide. In June, Congress convened a hearing focused on the technological tools that can effectively prevent or curtail the illegal file trafficking of music and movies. These cost-effective tools assist college administrators by protecting the network from potential viruses and spyware connected with several P2P services and by freeing the amount of usable bandwidth on the network that was otherwise consumed by the exchange of copyrighted works.

"The music industry is transforming how it does business and embracing digital distribution models of every kind," said Steven Marks, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, RIAA. "For students, many of these high-quality digital music options are available at deeply discounted rates – or even free. Those who continue to ignore great legal services and the law by stealing music online risk a federal lawsuit that could include thousands of dollars in penalties. With so many simple, easy and inexpensive ways to enjoy music legally these days, why take that risk?"

A survey by Student Monitor from last year found that more than half of college students download music and movies illegally. According to market research firm NPD, college students alone accounted for more than 1.3 billion illegal music downloads in 2006.

Since launching its deterrence program in February 2007, the RIAA has sent approximately 2,926 pre-litigation settlement letters to universities nationwide. The letters are in addition to the lawsuits that the RIAA continues to file on a rolling basis against those engaging in music theft via commercial Internet accounts.

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The Recording Industry Association of America is the trade group that represents the U.S. recording industry. Its mission is to foster a business and legal climate that supports and promotes our members' creative and financial vitality. Its members are the record companies that comprise the most vibrant national music industry in the world. RIAA® members create, manufacture and/or distribute approximately 90% of all legitimate sound recordings produced and sold in the United States. In support of this mission, the RIAA works to protect intellectual property rights worldwide and the First Amendment rights of artists; conducts consumer, industry and technical research; and monitors and reviews state and federal laws, regulations and policies. The RIAA® also certifies Gold®, Platinum®, Multi-Platinum™, and Diamond sales awards, as well as Los Premios De Oro y Platino™, an award celebrating Latin music sales.

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