

# Congress Takes Up Copyright and the NII

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On November 15, the House Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property and the Senate Committee on the Judiciary held a joint hearing on S. 1284 and, the National Information Infrastructure Copyright Protection Act of 1995. The focus of the hearing was the proposed changes to the Copyright Act included in these bills. Testimony was presented by Bruce Lehman, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Marybeth Peters, Register of Copyrights, and Mihaly Ficsor, Assistant Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Although all of the witnesses were supportive of changes to the [Copyright Act](#), Marybeth Peters noted that some additional changes vis-a-vis preservation issues would be needed. She also commented that a rethinking of the Copyright Act may be needed to address the fundamental changes resulting from the growing use of information technologies. "We note that...the legislation addresses only the current state of a rapidly-evolving technology, and that a more fundamental reexamination of the structure of the Copyright Act may be necessary in the near future." The Copyright Office will be submitting a second statement for the record addressing these "broad range of issues."

Some members of Congress did express concern that international activities could overtake congressional deliberations. Commissioner Lehman assured members of the Committees that this would not occur. The House Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property, Committee on the Judiciary, plans its next hearings on these bills for February 7 and 8.

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