



For Immediate Release
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THE U.S. COPYRIGHT INDUSTRIES LAUD THE CONCLUSION OF THE U.S.-BAHRAIN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), comprised of six trade associations and their over 1,300 companies representing the U.S. copyright industries, today applauded U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and his able team of negotiators for reaching final agreement on a Free Trade Agreement with Bahrain and for including a chapter on intellectual property rights and enforcement that sets the highest levels of copyright protection and enforcement. The strong copyright and enforcement standards of this FTA follow closely those developed in the FTA with Morocco. This Agreement places Bahrain at the forefront of Gulf countries in fostering the development of e-commerce and its local copyright based industries, including through full and prompt implementation of and accession to the WIPO "Internet" treaties and the commitment to improve its enforcement system to reduce piracy levels. Bahrain's foresight in moving to higher standards of copyright protection and enforcement will bolster additional economic reforms and attract foreign investment.

Eric H. Smith, IIPA President, said, "Ambassador Zoellick and his negotiators deserve the highest praise for achieving high standards of copyright protection and enforcement in this FTA with Bahrain. This FTA, the first with a Gulf country, sets important precedents that we expect to be followed in similar FTAs with other Gulf countries. IIPA believes this agreement will jump start the development of the full range of creative industries in the entire region and will promote an increasingly healthy and stable trade environment in Bahrain. This Agreement also represents a first step toward implementing President Bush's 2003 proposal for creating a Middle East Free Trade Area. Gulf countries' economies will increasingly depend on the creativity of their citizens – supported by comprehensive copyright protection – as new markets develop to promote trade in traditional copyrighted products as well as the digital transmission of copyrighted material globally. By agreeing to achieve these high levels of copyright protection and enforcement, Bahrain sets the standard for other countries in the region and has joined in partnership with the United States to promote the widest possible dissemination of copyright-based entertainment and educational products, as well as enabling technologies, around the world. We applaud Bahrain for its foresight in opening its economy including by providing a stable environment for the trade and investment in intellectual property."

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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 1,300 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).