Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 25, 2002

The Honorable John Ashcroft
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

Online theft of our nation's creative works is a growing threat to our culture and economy. The Federal government has a responsibility to vigorously enforce intellectual property laws on the Internet to punish these crimes and provide deterrence.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a staggering increase in the amount of intellectual property pirated over the Internet through peer-to-peer systems. According to recent news reports, the six most popular peer-to-peer software programs have been downloaded by computer users over 140 million times. Research has also shown that at any one time there may be as many as 2 million users simultaneously utilizing any one of these services.

In order to stem this growing tide of massive piracy on the Internet, we urge the Department to utilize its powers to:

- Prosecute operators of peer-to-peer systems who intentionally facilitate mass piracy;
- Prosecute individuals who intentionally allow mass copying from their computer over peer-to-peer networks; and
- Create more Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (CHIPs) units around the country with expanded authority to prosecute Internet piracy.

The copyright industries account for 5% of our gross domestic product. Increased criminal enforcement will ensure that these industries remain a driving force for economic growth.

Sincerely,

Joe Biden

Sen. Joseph Biden, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Crime and Drugs

Lamar Smith

Rep. Lamar Smith, Chairman
House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security

Bobby Scott

Rep. Bobby Scott, Ranking Member
House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Howard Coble

John Conyers Jr.

Bob Goodlatte

Lindy Graham

Henry Hyde

William L. Jenkins

Ed Bryant

Rick Keller

Adam Schiff

Robert Wexler

Daniel Lee

Melvin A. Hart

Rick Santorum

Carl Sisson

Dianne Feinstein

Frank Lenzenbrenner Jr.