Independent musicians' trade group comes out in support of SOPA, PIPA; some musicians...

January 18, 2012 | By Erik Maza | The Baltimore Sun

A couple of controversial, Internet piracy bills in Congress have pit the tech industry against the music business, even independents.

In a statement sent out early Wednesday afternoon, A2IM, the largest trade organization of independent musicians and labels, was the latest to support the Stop Online Piracy and the Protect Intellectual Property acts, despite that some high-profile indie musicians, like Baltimore's Wye Oak, are protesting the bills.

"Our members are small and medium sized independent businesses that invest in the creation of music and whose very existence is being threatened by the availability of illegal content online," the statement said.

It puts the indie trade organization in unusual company: the other groups supporting the bills are giants of industry, like News Corporation., the Recording Industry Association of America, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

A number of websites, including Wikipedia, Google, and Mozilla, today launched highly visible campaigns in protest of the bills; Wikipedia shut down in protest Wednesday. Over 100 college professors have also urged Congress to alter the proposed bills.

"Giving this enormous new power not just to the government but to any copyright and trademark owner would not only disrupt the operations of the allegedly infringing web site without a final judgment of wrongdoing," according to a petition signed by 108 college professors. "But would make it extraordinarily difficult for advertisers and credit card companies to do business on the Internet."