

Dear Rod,

Let me introduce myself; I am the CEO of the US Olympic Committee (USOC). As you may know, the USOC is one of America's premier sports organizations and is headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The USOC is the steward of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements in the United States and is part of the broader international Olympic family led by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, the United States Congress appointed the USOC to be the coordinating body for amateur sports and all Olympic-related and Paralympic-related athletic activity in the United States and the exclusive entity with control over the phrases "Olympic" and "Paralympic" (and related terms) in commerce in the United States.

I am writing to you today to personally request that ICANN place certain Olympic terms on the "reserved list" in the gTLD Guidebook. I imagine you may be familiar with this request. The USOC and IOC have been engaged in the debate around the expansion of the gTLDs since it was initiated a few years ago. We have made formal submissions to ICANN on a number of occasions asking to be placed on a "reserved list." We are concerned that without this particular mechanism of protection, the new ICANN policy will unintentionally open the floodgates to third parties seeking to infringe upon our exclusive rights to the very well-known Olympic brands. Defending against such a scenario via the mechanisms proposed by ICANN will certainly be costly to our unique organizations. We are worried that we will need to spend millions of our limited resources on registering our terms and monitoring for infringements of our terms, or that we would be forced to protect our rights under the Act in court. Every dollar we spend on such efforts will take resources away from athletes preparing for the Olympic Games.

I understand ICANN has concerns about setting an unwanted precedent by placing the Olympic terms on the "reserved list." Seeking the placement of the Olympic terminology and symbols on a "reserved list" is nothing new. They have already been reserved legally in many countries. The Olympic properties are protected in at least 39 countries around the world by unique statutes reserving their exclusive use to the IOC and the relevant National Olympic Committee, including in the US by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act as noted above. The only other organization with such legal protection is the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Both the USOC/IOC and Red Cross/Red Crescent have received unanimous support from the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) for our requests to be placed on the "reserved list."

I completely respect the difficult task you have of ensuring the credibility of the ICANN organization, both domestically and internationally. I can only imagine how many letters, e-mails and calls you are receiving about the Guidebook, asking you to make one change or another. I hope that you will take my personal request and those of the IOC into consideration. This should be a relatively minor change to the Guidebook, and will save a considerable amount of financial and human resources over time.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you need any additional information. I would naturally welcome any advice or recommendations you may have that would help resolve this issue.

Sincerely,

Scott Blackmun
CEO, US Olympic Committee