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Public Works for a Better Government

January 30, 2013

Rt. Hon. Francis Maude, MP
Minister of State
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

Dear Minister:

When it is stated in Magna Carta “we will sell to no man ... either Justice or Right,” I believe the Barons and the Parliaments that repeatedly reaffirmed the Great Charter were referring to more than just the sale of judgements in the courts of law. If a statute that is binding on the people of the United Kingdom were to be only available for them to read for a price, and if the people were unable to make copies of this statute without prior permission, this practice would clearly violate long-standing principles of the Rule of Law and the Constitution, as well as Magna Carta.

In today’s technical world, many of our most important laws are promulgated to guarantee the public safety. Building codes, fire codes, standards for the safety of toys and prams, standards for the transportation of hazardous materials, and technical regulations that guarantee the safety of the foods we eat are all the law of the land.

Although these technical standards have the force of law, including criminal penalties for their violation, most of them are only available at exceedingly high prices. Most of these technical standards are required by the European Union and are required to be enacted without modification in each country. Yet these laws are only available for purchase and, most insidiously, citizens are warned in dire terms that they may not repeat or speak these laws without first applying for permission, stating the reason they wish to speak the laws, and paying a toll.

Recently, our nonprofit corporation has launched an effort to make public safety laws around the world available on a noncommercial basis by publishing 10,062 legally-mandated edicts of government. We have transformed many of these standards by rekeying them into HTML and are beginning the process of converting the formulas into MATHML and the graphics to SVG. We have done so in order to promote public education and public safety, equal justice for all, a better informed citizenry, the rule of law, world trade and world peace, as we believe it is the right of all humans to know and speak the laws that govern them.

I am writing today for your help. We believe our publication of the Eurocode, the UK National Annexes, and binding public safety standards that govern personal protective equipment, medical devices, food processing machinery, product safety, and other mandatory European Union standards is legal and right. But, we understand that sale

of the law has led to lucrative revenue streams and million-dollar salaries for the executives that stand between the people and the laws that govern them, and that these special interests may view our actions as contrary to their interests.

While we believe that our actions meet longstanding provisions of Rule of Law and human rights under both UK and EU law, we did not do this to provoke a legal fight. Our aim is solely to make the laws that bind us available to the people that must obey them. I therefore hope that somebody in a position of authority, such as yourself, can bring the parties together and begin a discussion of important issues. Groups such as the British Standards Institution do invaluable work that saves lives, and promotes safety and trade. Their work must continue. However, this cannot be at the sacrifice of the rule of law.

You may find the work that we have published on this topic at the following URL:

<https://law.resource.org/pub/12tables.html>

The United Kingdom has shown the world a better way in the last few years when it comes to open government. The system for publishing laws at legislation.gov.uk is without a doubt the best in the world, the standard to which many other countries look to emulate. Your leadership on the Open Government Partnership has helped motivate countries around the world to take steps to assure the fundamental rights of their citizens.

I realize you have many pressing matters to attend to, but if you can devote attention to making public safety laws for the United Kingdom more broadly available, I believe you can make a difference in the lives of the citizens of your country, the European Union, and the world. Your assistance would be much appreciated around the world and by myself.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Carl Malamud
Public.Resource.Org