LONDON (Reuters) - **Paul McCartney** and **Robbie Williams** joined thousands of other performers on Thursday in an appeal for an extension to British copyright on their recordings.

They called for "fair play for musicians" in a full-page advertisement in the Financial Times containing more than 4,000 names.

On Wednesday a review for the government rejected extending copyright on sound recordings and performers' rights beyond the existing 50 years.

The advert said it had been placed on behalf of more than 3,500 record companies and 40,000 performers.

"We call upon the UK government to support the extension of copyright in sound recordings," the appeal read.

**Cliff Richard**, whose first hit "Move It!" from 1958 is close to the cut-off point for copyright protection, has led the way in highlighting the issue.

Without a change in the law, the catalog of McCartney's Beatles could be up for grabs from 2012 and 2013, including early hits like "Love Me Do" and "I Want To Hold Your Hand."

In his report on intellectual property, former Financial Times editor Andrew Gowers argued the consumer must be protected as well as the artist. He said there was no evidence bands moved to the United States or elsewhere to extend their copyright protection.

The British Phonographic Industry says it will continue to lobby for a copyright extension to 95 years, the same as in the United States, and noted the final decision lies with the **European Commission**.
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