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Barbara Bloomberg

Regional Coordinator

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"Friday Night Live builds partnerships for positive and healthy youth development which engage youth as active leaders and resources in their communities
October 16, 2003

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P0 Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

Dear Chief,

As a prevention activist, educator and consumer, I am troubled by the mislabeling and taxation of many flavored malt beverages as malt beverages, despite the source of their alcohol content. I support the TTB's proposal to clarify and correct the taxation, classification, and handling of flavored malt beverages by treating these beverages as distilled spirits.

I support the proposed regulation because of my concern about underage drinking and the appeal of "alcopops" to young people. Correct classification, appropriate distribution and responsible labeling will help reduce the chance that teenagers will have easy access to these alcohols.

I support the proposed regulation regarding certain flavored malt beverages as spirits products. Makers of flavored malt beverages should not be permitted to manipulate existing laws to find the lowest taxes, easiest distribution, and most accessible advertising. If a product is made from distilled beverages it should be treated as such.

I support TTB's proposed alcohol content labeling for certain alternatives, but urge TTB to require such labeling for all "alcopop" products as well as for beer.

Thank you for addressing this serious issue. While I am sure there will be cries of "economic hardship" from the industry, I urge you to keep the regulation strong, clear and uncompromised. The larger public health and safety issue needs to be expeditiously addressed by finalizing this rule. TTB should act quickly to avoid further delays in pending state efforts to appropriately regulate "alcopop" products.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bloomberg
Regional Coordinator