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From: Justin Isenhour [jisenhour@excite.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2003 4:54 PM  
To: Rulemaking, TTB  
Subject: Support of TTB Notice #4  
September 17, 2003

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division  
Tax and Trade Bureau  
PO Box 50221  
Washington, D.C. 20031-0221

RE: TTB Notice #4

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in support of the proposed standard of composition for Flavored Malt Beverages ("FMB's"), as set forth by the Tax and Trade Bureau ("TTB") in TTB Notice No. 4 of March 2003. This proposal is important for beer consumers as it clearly delineates the difference between beer and other alcohol beverages.

The United States has, in the past quarter of a century, experienced a revival in the brewing industry, from a low of 41 breweries to today's high of more than 1,400 breweries. The revival is predicated on renewed commitment to traditional processes and beer styles. Beer lovers, such as myself, have been treated to a surfeit of flavors and brands that cannot be found in any other country. By focusing on the unique qualities of malt beverages, we are also encouraging respect for the brewing art and an appreciation of the special place of beer in our culture. This outlook fosters moderate and responsible consumption, a critical public policy goal.

I feel that this proposed rule as a critical step towards consistent classification of alcoholic beverages. Maintaining an orderly marketplace is an important concern for beer lovers. Your proposed rule will likely help to maintain clear and distinct definitions that will guarantee consistent policies for each alcohol category. This will help ensure the maintenance of the rich diversity of offerings unique to the United States.

Furthermore, any alternative to the TTB proposal will likely trigger disruptive state legislative and regulatory actions. These measures could have significant ramifications for the more than 1,400 small breweries and for thousands of alcohol beverage licensees, most of which are also small businesses. The limitations on diversity and availability would be devastating for beer lovers.

I affirm my support for the proposed "0.5% standard" for FMBs. Its consistency with historical interpretations of federal regulations will help maintain the integrity of the beer category, and keep the United States the best place in the world to enjoy quality beer.

Sincerely,

Justin Isenhour

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