

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor
Mark R. Warner
Governor

September 3, 2003

Mr. William Foster
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
P.O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

Attention: Notice 4
Dear Mr. Foster

As Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I am writing to express my support for the United States Treasury Department Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau's (TTB) proposed rulemaking for flavored malt beverages (200 1R-136P). I concur with and endorse the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Board's support of the 0.5% alcohol by volume standard proposed by the ITB.

Adoption of the new rule is important on several fronts. I strongly believe that the TTB's proposed action will provide clarification of the federal alcohol beverage categories, thereby continuing to facilitate the maintenance of an orderly marketplace; it will eliminate consumer confusion; and, it will help sustain the long-term development of the product category. Furthermore, the new standard will ensure that all alcohol beverage products will be consistent with state tax, license, and distribution laws allowing wholesalers and retailers to continue to distribute, sell and market flavored malt beverages as they do today.

Finally, while there are some who have concerns regarding the ability of manufacturers to produce flavored malt beverage products in accordance with the new proposal, manufacturers have already demonstrated the expertise and technical ability necessary to brew these products under the new federal standard. Flavored malt beverage products will continue to be available to wholesalers and retailers in all states with no interruption and no discernable taste differences for consumers.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my viewpoint on this important issue. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Warner

State Capitol • Richmond, Virginia 23219 • (804) 786-2211 • TTY (804) 371-8015 •
www.governor.state.va.us