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TTB Notice No.4
Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
PO Box 50221
Washington, D.C. 20091-0221

To Whom It May Concern:

As a consumer, taxpayer and employee of the beer industry. I am writing to express my support for the proposed rule issued in March 2003 by the Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) that requires that the alcohol content from distilled alcohol cannot exceed 0.5% for a flavored malt beverage (FMB) to be classified as beer.

Adoption of the TTB 0.5 by volume standard" would ensure the integrity of beer and the brewing process consistent with the historical interpretation of what constitutes beer and other malt beverages. Equating beer and beverages that derive a majority of their alcohol content from distilled spirits is a slippery slope that could weaken the important historical and physical distinctions that exist between beer and spirits, which have a much higher alcohol concentration than beer. These distinctions impact state and federal policies regarding the regulation and taxation of beer and other alcohol beverages.

If traditional distinctions disappear, it will only be a matter of time before other producers of alcohol beverages attempt to categorize themselves as beer products.

As one who appreciates the fine, crisp taste of a cold beer, and supports the longevity of an industry that provides billions of dollars in revenue to the U.S. economy. I believe it is in the country's best interest to ensure that the integrity and purity of this product are protected. The TTB's final approval of the proposed 0.5% standard on FMBs would ensure consumers are well served and their interests protected.

Sincerely,
C. Michelle Semones