

Bill Harmon
State Representative



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**House of Representatives
State of Tennessee**

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Transportation
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September 9, 2005

William H. Foster, Chief
Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
ATTN: Notice No. 41
Post Office Box 14412
Washington, DC 20044-4412

Van Buren

Dear Sir:

With regard to Notice No. 41 where the TTB is seeking public comment on whether additional requirement should be added to current alcohol product labels, I write to oppose any effort that would include "standard serving" information on an over-simplified listing of the amount of pure alcohol on label or advertising. Our primary area of concern relates to how the amount for alcohol in a product should be communicated. On the question of alcohol content, we support continuing the longstanding federal policy of using the percent alcohol by volume, or proof, as the only appropriate way to describe alcohol content. We strongly oppose proposals to display alcohol content in terms of fluid ounces of pure alcohol per "standard serving." This misguided attempt would cover up the significant differences in strength, concentration and effect between liquor, wine and beer. Communicating alcohol content in any way would be misleading a potentially dangerous and would hinder, rather than promote, responsible drinking. Instead, continuing the longstanding and meaningful measure of the percentage of alcohol by volume is in the best interest of consumers and the public.

In addition, TTB should recognize that there is not such a thing as a "standard serving" and this too should not be permitted on any alcohol labels or advertising. While "serving size" is fairly common for beer, it varies widely for hard liquor. Different jiggers for hard liquor containing anywhere from 1 to 3 fluid ounces and most mixed drinks are "free poured." Moreover, very few people could define a "standard serving" for ports, sherries, liqueurs, fortified wines and other less common alcohol beverages.

37th District

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Further, looking at the "top 10" hard liquor drinks on popular mixed drinks website like Happy-Hour.net, Barfliers.com, and DrinkNation.com, confirms that the average drinks contains 75% more alcohol than the hard liquor industry's so called "standard drink." In fact, drinks like a Mohito, Mai-Tai, Martini and Long Island Iced Tea contains significantly more alcohol than a "standard one ounce serving."

Further still, state law and regulation will be negatively impacted by an effort to allow absolute alcohol per standard serving information on a label. Labeling the percentage of alcohol is the proper policy, thus, changes in this area could put companies at risk of violating state laws.

We would ask that you do not support this misleading effort that will cause more public confusion, not less. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Harmon", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Bill Harmon

BH:ss