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TEL (503) 861-4275 Fax (503) 861-2750  
Clatsop Distributing Co.

Distributors of Choice Beers & Fine Wines, and Natural Beverages

Mailing: P.O. Box 420, ASTORIA, OR 97103-2797 • Shipping: 1375 SE 12th PLACE, WARRENTON  
OR 97146

Owner - LARRY PERKINS

September 10, 2003

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

September 10, 2003

Dear Sir or Madam:

Clatsop Distributing Company supports the proposed rule issued in March 2003 by the Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) that outlines the alcohol content requirements in order for flavored malt beverages (FMB) to be classified as beer. Specifically the TTB proposes that for an FMB to be classified as beer, its alcohol content from distilled alcohol cannot exceed 0.5%.

Beer is a unique product that has been regulated and taxed differently than other alcohol beverages throughout our nation's history. The TTB proposed rule consistent with the historical interpretation of what constitutes beer and other malt beverages. The distinct regulatory treatment of beer is based on its age-old production process, and its definition in the Internal Revenue Code dates back to the 1800s when Congress first imposed the beer excise tax. Adoption of the TTB "0.5 by volume standard" would ensure the integrity of beer and the brewing process.

Consistent regulatory policy is important because while states enjoy regulatory power in most federal regulatory guidelines. This proposed rule would help maintain an orderly marketplace and avoid costly and confusing disruptions in state licensing, taxation and distribution policies, any of which would deal a severe blow to beer wholesalers.

Moreover, equating beer and beverages that derive a majority of their alcohol content from distilled spirits could weaken the important distinctions between beer and products with higher alcohol content.

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.

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Beer is not distilled spirits. Beer is not fortified wine. Beer is not a product that has been made through the distillation process. Beer is made through the brewing process. The 0.5% standard will ensure that the integrity of the beer remains.

Once again, Clatsop Distributing Company encourages the TTB to give final approval to the proposed 0.5% standard on FMBs.

Sincerely,

Larry Perkins  
President