



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY ALEX

ALEX DECROCE

REPUBLICAN LEADER

ASSEMBLYMAN, 26TH DISTRICT
MORRIS COUNTY • PASSAIC COUNTY
101 GIBRALTAR DRIVE, SUITE 1A
MORRIS PLAINS, NJ 07950
(973) 984-0922 FAX (973) 984-8094
asmdecroce@njleg.org

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Chief, Regulations & Procedures Division
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau
ATTN: Notice No. 41
PO Box 14412
Washington, DC 20044-4412

Dear Chief:

Current federal alcohol beverages label regulations do not allow most beer, wine and distilled spirit companies to provide information about their products so that consumers can make informed choices about what to drink and how much to drink. The Bureau is to be commended for seeking public comment on this proposed change in regulations.

Food, soft drinks, over-the-counter drugs, and even dietary supplements provide consumers with basic consumer information on the label. Alcohol beverages (with some exceptions) are the only major class of consumable goods that do not provide this type of information on the label. The Bureau should allow labels to include information voluntary such as serving size and servings per container, as well as alcohol, calories, fat, carbohydrates and protein per serving.

Of all this information, the amount of alcohol per serving would be highly beneficial for consumers to have.

Allowing placement of information on the amount of alcohol per serving and servings per container on beer, wine and distilled spirits labels will help consumers to better understand what they are drinking. In fact, given the wide variety of formulations, container sizes and alcohol concentrations in today's products, and the regulatory disparities as to what information may be placed on beer, wine and distilled spirits labels, many consumers might welcome more information about how particular products relate to government guidelines on alcohol consumption.

Consumer Serving Facts will be more meaningful if the Bureau makes it clear in this rulemaking what constitutes a "serving." This is the essential fact that will allow consumers to make more informed comparisons between products and better understand what is in a standard serving of any alcoholic beverage.

The standard serving definition used in the Dietary Guidelines (12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of table wine and 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits) is one widely used by U.S. government agencies, public health groups, consumer groups, and a majority of state driver's license manuals. It makes sense to use the same definition as the benchmark for labels.

I urge the Bureau to act expeditiously to promulgate a regulation that permits meaningful consumer-oriented serving facts on beer, wine and spirits labels. Meanwhile, I urge the Bureau to allow manufacturers to provide this kind of truthful, non-misleading information on labels while the rulemaking process proceeds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex DeCroce", is written over the typed name.

Alex DeCroce