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# City of Benton

Illinois

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Gary Kraft, Mayor

COMMENT 44

June 2, 2005  
Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division  
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Tr. de Bureau  
Attn. Notice No. 39  
PO Box 14412  
Washington, D. C. 20044

RE: Notice No. 39. Rebuttal of Proposal for the establishment of Shawnee Hills AVA

Dear Sir(s):

I write in behalf of the people in the area of the City of Benton, IL, which is marginalized by the proposed Shawnee Hills AVA and which has many vineyards and two wineries that would be unfairly excluded. As mayor of the City of Benton, Illinois, I take pride in the way the industry has been developing in the last few years, I know that for many years the grapes grown in Spring Pond Vineyard which is located at the edge of the city, were sold to Alto Vineyards in Alto Pass, Illinois. At the time the grapes were judged to be of excellent quality.

I have reviewed the information presented to me and find the boundaries advocated in the Shawnee Hills proposal arbitrary and divisive. I am supportive of the concept of an AVA and want to commend the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau for administering this program, but I can not support the Shawnee Hills AVA proposal in its current form.

The natural boundary for any visitor and resident of the area is the Interstate I-64 corridor. There are just too many vineyards scattered through this area to pretend to draw an artificial line like has been attempted in this proposal. Any climatic differences should be left to market forces and sustainability of the enterprise, rather than pretend to draw an artificial line along the bottom of ditches, unnamed dirt roads, and through the center of communities like Carbondale and Marion.

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I plead you to rule against the formation of the Shawnee Hills AVA and to remanded  
back to the growers for further discussion and revision,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Kraft". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "K".

Gary Kraft  
Mayor of Benton