-----Original Message-----
From: Thomas Rice [mailto:trice@calpoly.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2007 1:03 PM
To: Rulemaking, TTB
Subject: Form Post from Firefox

name=Thomas J. Rice, Ph.D., C.P.S.S.
name=Certified Professional Soil Scientist No. 1932
Address1=915 Turtle Creek Drive
Address2=
City=Paso Robles
State=CA
Zip Code=93446
Comments=April 17, 2007

RE: 27 CFR Part 9 [Notice No. 71] RIN 1513-AB27, "Proposed Establishment of the Paso Robles Westside Viticultural Area" (2006R-087P). Agency: Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB).

I am the author of a report entitled "Soils of the Paso Robles American Viticultural Area (AVA)," which was submitted to Rachel Dumas, Compli, Inc. of Paso Robles, CA on July 12, 2005. It is my understanding that my soils report was included with the "Proposed Establishment of the Paso Robles Westside Viticultural Area" petition (hereafter referred to as "the petition").

When I submitted my original soils report to Ms. Dumas, I understood that it was to be used to compare soils conditions in the areas of the Paso Robles AVA, which are located to the east and to the west of the Salinas River. After my report submission on July 12, 2005, I was not made aware of this Paso Robles Westside petition until late March 2007. I did not have any role in the final preparation or production of the petition. After I was made aware of the petition, I carefully examined it and concluded that many statements attributed to me and my original July 2005 soils report were either inaccurate, taken out of context, or were false conclusions. I subsequently filed Comment No. 94 to address the "Soils" section of the petition.

Upon further examination of the petition, I wish to set the record straight regarding all of the statements attributed to me in the "Topography" and "Soils" sections of the petition.

The facts as I know them are listed below. These facts are based on over twenty (20) years of my personal soil mapping experiences within the entire Paso Robles AVA.

1. The table in the petition entitled “Percentage of Terrain Types” is not from my soils report. Instead, it is a distorted condensation of a larger table found in the Executive Summary section of my soils report. The table in the petition is inaccurate and misleading relative to the “terrain types” in the Paso Robles AVA. The table in my original soils report lists several soil distributions relative to various landforms within the Paso Robles AVA. My original table was never intended to show “Topography” or landform variability within the Paso Robles AVA. Therefore, the “Percentage of Terrain Types” table in the petition should NOT be used to represent “topographical differences” between areas located east and west of the Salinas River, as stated in the petition.

2. Soils within the proposed Paso Robles Westside AVA are variable, due to the great diversity in mesoclimates, topography, native vegetation, soil age, and soil parent materials. Both residual soils, derived from a variety of geological formations, and transported soils, both alluvium and colluvium, exist on both the east and west sides of the Salinas River throughout the larger Paso Robles AVA. Some of these soils are alkaline and contain calcium carbonates, and others are neutral to acidic, and often do not contain carbonates. Similar soil distributions are found both the west and east sides of the Salinas River.

3. The Paso Robles Westside petition states “the Westside contains soils unique to the area.” This statement is inaccurate and was never included in my original soils report. Not a single soil series mapped by the USDA that occurs within the proposed Paso Robles Westside AVA is unique to that area. For example, one of the most common soil map units planted to vineyards is the "Linne-Calodo complex." These soils are derived from soil parent materials weathered from the Monterey Formation and consist of both siliceous and calcareous sandstones and shales with some limestone. These Linne and Calodo soils also occur on the east side of the Salinas River. They are located east of Templeton, in the El Pomar area, and also near the towns of San Miguel and Creston.

4. The “Soils” section of the petition did not include an important statement that I wrote in my original soils report. This statement is “There are also many upland hillside soil areas on the east side of the Salinas River, which are derived from the Monterey Formation and resemble the soils on the west side of the river.” This important statement of mine should have been included in the petition.

I have studied the soils, geology and landform patterns within the Paso Robles AVA for over 20 years. Over these years, I have discussed potential AVA subdivision scenarios with several winery and vineyard owners. I suggested that the initial action to assist the subdivision of this large Paso Robles AVA was to produce major watershed maps of this area. That is, use existing U.S. Geological Survey topography maps to generate digital elevation maps (DEM's) of all the major watersheds within the Paso Robles AVA. For example, on

a large DEM of the entire AVA, delineate the watershed boundaries of Tablas Creek, San Marcos Creek, the Huerhuero River, the Estrella River, Paso Robles Creek, the upper Salinas River and the other major water drainageways. Then, overlay environmental "layers" on this watershed map, including soils maps, geology maps, information on prevailing wind patterns, and other relevant climatic (precipitation and temperature) data. After all of these watershed and environmental maps are prepared, examine them with winery and vineyard owners to determine whether any logical environmental and land use patterns emerge. Finally, draw the final Paso Robles AVA subdivision boundaries using real environmental parameters (like watershed boundaries, soils maps, geology maps, and climatic zones), which do not exclusively use the "market-based" desires of individual landowners when designating the final AVA subdivision boundaries.

This approach, which is discussed above, was followed by a group called the "Paso Robles AVA Committee," which are presently proposing multiple subdivisions of the larger Paso Robles AVA. Their Paso Robles AVA subdivision maps will be scientifically defensible. I support the efforts of the Paso Robles AVA Committee and respectfully request the rejection of this Paso Robles Westside petition.

In conclusion, I urge the TTB to reject the Paso Robles Westside petition based on its inaccurate, misleading and false statements related to topography and soils diversity within the larger Paso Robles AVA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thomas J. Rice, Ph.D., C.P.S.S.
Certified Professional Soil Scientist No. 1932
915 Turtle Creek Drive
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Phone: (805) 239-2233
Cell: (805) 440-8664
Fax: (805) 756-5412
e-mail: trice@calpoly.edu