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September 15, 2003

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P. O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

Dear Sir or Madam:

It is my great pleasure, as an elected official, to submit this letter of support for the U. S. Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau proposed rulemaking for flavored malt beverages (2001R-136P0).

I believe the TTB's action is an important clarification of federal alcohol beverage categories established to maintain an orderly US marketplace. The debate surrounding the proposed standard poses important issues for the stability, of the retail licensing system and the overall marketplace. -

This standard is the most efficient means to address recent concerns by both, federal and state officials. If adopted, the standard will maintain an orderly marketplace, meet consumer expectations for consistent products, and help sustain the long-term development of the product category. In addition, these reformulated procedures will be consistent with state tax, license, and distribution laws allowing wholesalers and retailers to continue to distribute, sell,

and market
flavored malt beverages as they do today.

Absent a national standard rooted in existing law and regulation, manufacturers, retailers, and wholesalers will face a potential patchwork of individual state laws and regulations where the same product may be ultimately sold, as a "beer" in one state and as a "distilled spirit" in another.

There are some who have concerns regarding the availability of manufacturers to produce FMB products in accordance with the new proposal. As you may know, brewers have already demonstrated the expertise and technical ability to brew these products under the new federal standard. The FMB products that look and taste the same will be available to wholesalers and retailers in all states with no interruption and no discernible taste differences for consumers.

Thank you very much for your consideration of the current TTB proposed rulemaking for flavored malt beverages. Please know that this measure has my full support.

Sincerely,

George D. Maziarz
Senator, 62nd District

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