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REPLY TO BOISE OFFICE

September 24, 2003

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

Attn: Notice 4

Dear Sir:

As a former Idaho State Senator, I am writing to express my support for the U.S. Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau proposed rulemaking for a national standard of 0.5% for flavored malt beverages.

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

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 products 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.

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

Thank you for this opportunity for me to offer my support for the current TTB proposed rulemaking for flavored malt beverages.

Sincerely;

Charles A. Smyser