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August 13, 2003

Mr. Arthur Libertucci, Administrator
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P O Box 50221
Washington, D.C. 20091-0221

Dear Mr. Libertucci:

With reference to Notice 4, I am writing in my capacity as an Alabama State Senator to express my support for the United States Treasury Department Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau's proposed rulemaking for flavored malt beverages (200 1R-136P).

Intended to maintain an orderly marketplace in our country, the Federal alcohol beverage categories will receive a much-needed clarification. Once the proposed rule is adopted, the standard will help insure an orderly marketplace, provide for consistency in products to meet consumer expectations, as well as help sustain the long-term development of the product category. Also, the consistency of these reformulated products with state tax, license, and distribution laws will allow wholesalers and retailers to continue to distribute, sell and market flavored malt beverages as they do today. Furthermore, the proposed standard's debate provides for an important opportunity for the discussion of the stability of the retail licensing system and the overall marketplace.

There are some who have concerns regarding the ability of manufacturers to produce flavored malt beverage products in accordance with the new proposal; however, brewers have already demonstrated the expertise and technical ability necessary to brew these products under the new Federal standard. The flavored malt beverage products that look and taste the same will continue to be available to wholesalers and retailers in all states with no interruption and no discernable taste difference for consumers.

I appreciate your consideration of my recommendation on this important issue. I hope you will call me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

E.B. McClain