



Comment
No. 1

HARRY H. WETZEL • P. O. BOX 175 • 8644 HIGHWAY 128 • HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA 95448-0175

707-433-7209

May 23, 1986

Director
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Sir:

I am writing to protest your "correction" in the boundaries of the Alexander Valley appellation. During 1983 the application for designation as an appellation underwent intensive scrutiny and the natural boundaries of the valley were unreasonably extended to include growers in Cloverdale. This recent attempt to further enlarge its borders will result in more confusion and dilution of the recognized character of grapes grown in this appellation.

The Alexander Valley appellation has a steadily growing reputation as one of the premier wine grape regions in the world. In order to maintain that recognition, grapes bearing that designation must be of a consistent quality and stylistic character. Grapes from the "northern Alexander Valley" are exposed to a different microclimate than that of the geographic and historic valley.

I do not understand how this "correction" in the appellation can be made without hearings on the subject.

I am firmly against any further expansion of the Alexander Valley appellation.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]
Harry H. Wetzel, III
Winemaker
Managing Partner

Aide de Comp

SARA SCHORSKE

GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE
WRITING & RESEARCH

June 10, 1986

*Ram
6.17.86*

Chief, FAA, Wine and Beer Branch
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
P. O. Box 385
(Ref: Notice 591)
Washington, D.C. 20044-0385

Gentlemen:

I am opposed to the proposed overlapping of the Alexander Valley Viticultural Area and the Russian River Valley Viticultural Area as proposed in Notice No. 591. I believe that the overlapping of viticultural areas is appropriate in some cases; however, in this case it is not.

When the Russian River Valley Viticultural Area was established, it was distinguished from the neighboring Alexander Valley Viticultural Area on the basis of climate, the former being "Coastal Cool" and the latter "Coastal Warm". Evidence has now been presented that suggests that the Digger Bend area north of Healdsburg is indeed "Coastal Warm". My historical and climatic research in connection with the petition for the pending Sonoma Coast Viticultural Area corroborates this conclusion.

The ATF has already established that the transition between the "Coastal Cool" and "Coastal Warm" climates represents the dividing line between the two viticultural areas in question. That being the case, the Digger Bend area should be removed from the Russian River Valley Viticultural Area, as the Digger Bend petition apparently requests, and annexed into the Alexander Valley Viticultural Area. I am aware of no evidence relating to climate or other relevant features that support an argument to keep the Digger Bend area in the Russian River Valley.

From a climatic point of view, the boundary of the Russian River Valley as it was first proposed was a good first approximation, but not entirely accurate. I encourage you to refine the boundary whenever new, more detailed evidence is made available.

Please put me on your mailing list to receive future notices regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,



Sara Schorske