

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 19, 2007

The Honorable Henry Paulson
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Mr. John Manfreda
Administrator, Alcohol and Tobacco
Tax and Trade Bureau
1310 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Paulson and Administrator Manfreda:

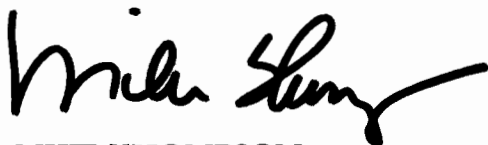
We are writing in response to the June 19, 2007 letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs to Rep. Mike Thompson and Rep. George Radanovich, which indicates that the Treasury Department will "suspend" the current regulations related to the establishment of AVAs (American Viticultural Areas) for the purpose of "revising the existing regulatory framework." As members of the Congressional Wine Caucus, we strongly oppose this course of action.

Since 1986, when Congress granted the Treasury Department authority to create an AVA system, these regulations have served to inform and protect the American public. We see absolutely no reason to suspend the regulations regarding AVAs or to focus specifically on AVAs within AVAs that account for the majority of the existing and pending AVAs. These regulations, which were established after long deliberation in consultation with the wine industry, are clear and unambiguous.

The foundations of the AVA program are to provide consumers with accurate information about wine origin and to protect consumers from false and misleading marketing of wine with respect to origin. The regulations clearly accomplish these goals and make wine producers aware that their future use of geographic brand names would be limited to wines from the named place.

In addition, your proposed suspension of the existing rules related to AVAs, including halting all processing of petitions for AVAs within AVAs, will create chaos in the wine industry and deprive many wineries with pending petitions of their rights under your current regulations.

Before you take any action to alter the complex balance of the AVA system, we would like to work with you to study the administration of the current regulations and motivations for making changes to regulations that have been successfully applied for over twenty years. Should it be necessary, we will also request that the Ways & Means Committee hold an oversight hearing to study this issue further. We look forward to discussing this with you.

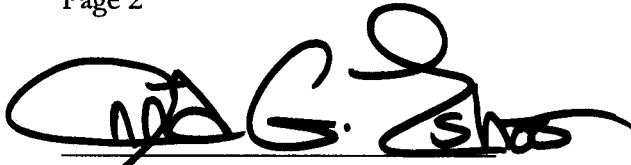


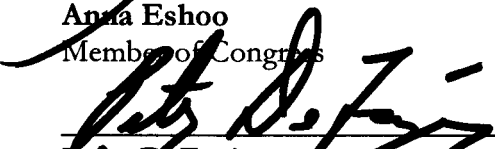
MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

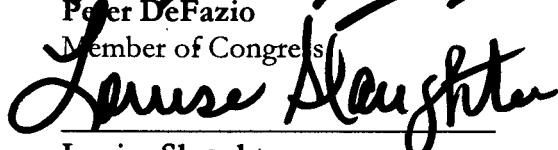
Sincerely,

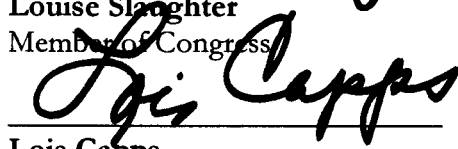


GEORGE RADANOVICH
Member of Congress

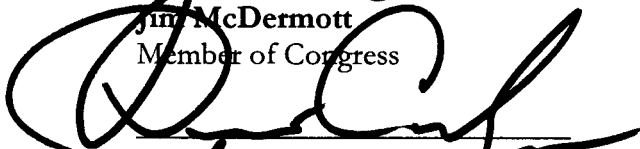

Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

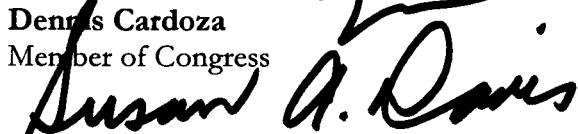

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

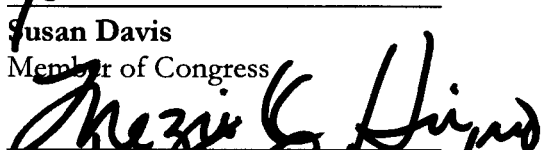

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

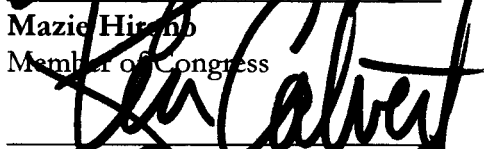

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

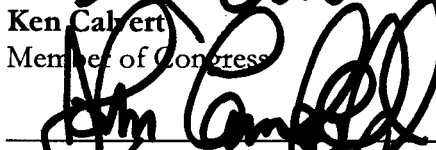

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

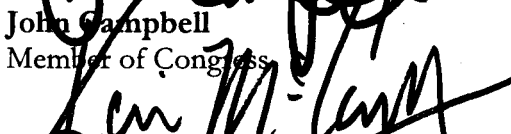

Dennis Cardoza
Member of Congress

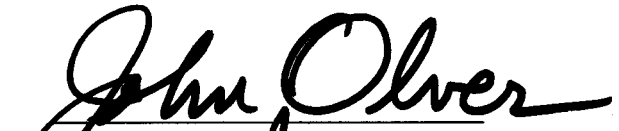

Susan Davis
Member of Congress

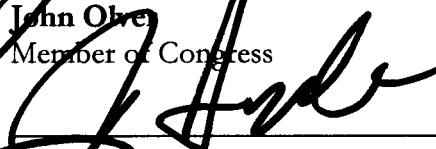

Mazie Hirono
Member of Congress

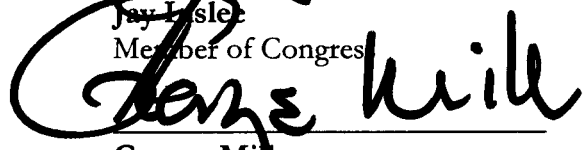

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

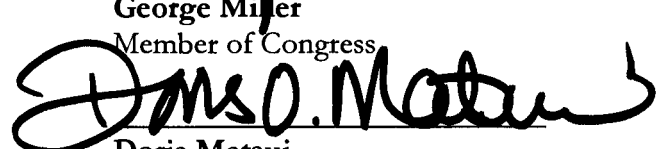

John Campbell
Member of Congress

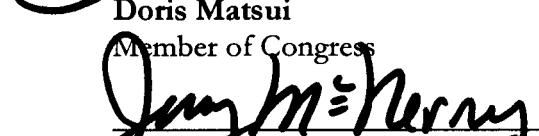

Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress

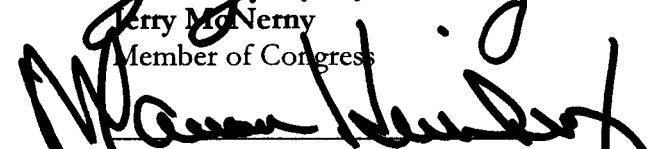

John Oliver
Member of Congress

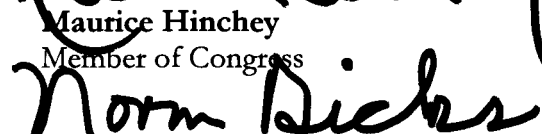

Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

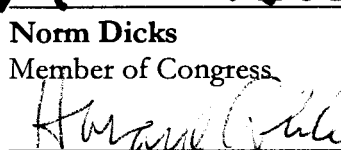

George Miller
Member of Congress

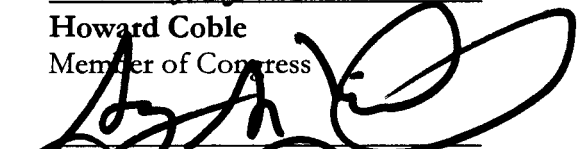

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

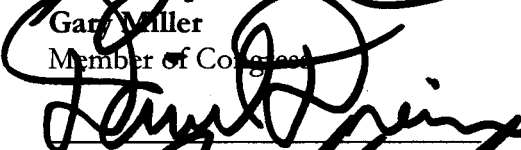

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

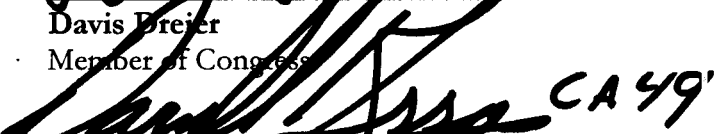

Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress

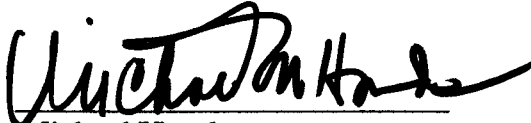

Norm Dicks
Member of Congress


Howard Coble
Member of Congress

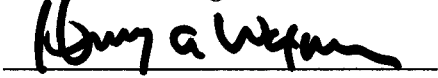

Gary Miller
Member of Congress

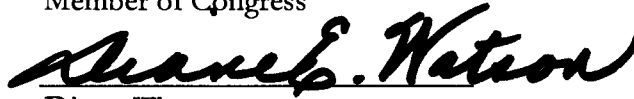

Davis Breier
Member of Congress

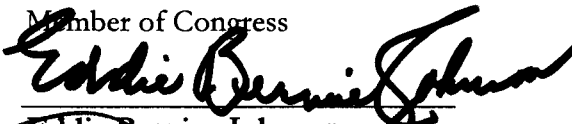

Darrell Issa
Member of Congress

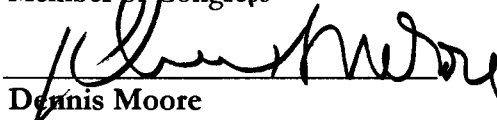

Michael Honda
Member of Congress

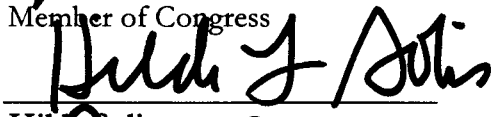

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress


Henry Waxman
Member of Congress

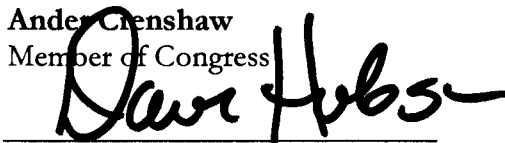

Diane Watson
Member of Congress


Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

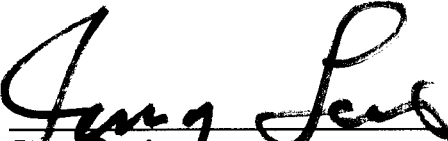

Dennis Moore
Member of Congress

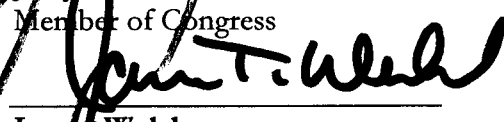

Hilda Solis
Member of Congress

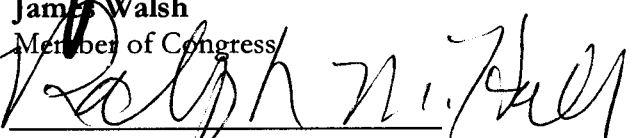

Ander Crenshaw
Member of Congress


David Hobson
Member of Congress


Pete Stark
Member of Congress

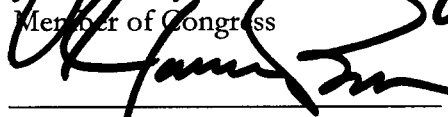

Jerry Lewis
Member of Congress

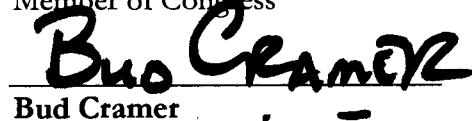

James Walsh
Member of Congress

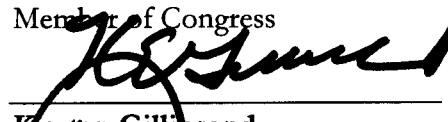

Ralph Hall
Member of Congress


Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

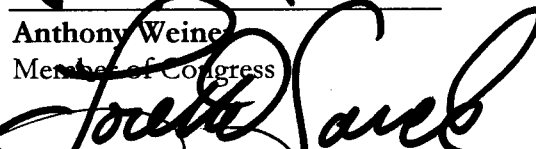

Jim McCreery
Member of Congress

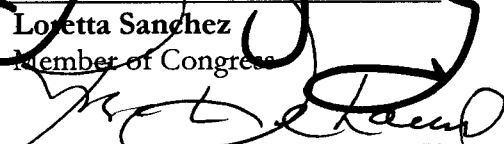

Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress


Bud Cramer
Member of Congress

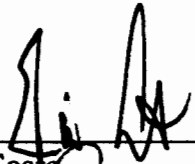

Kirsten Gillibrand
Member of Congress


Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress

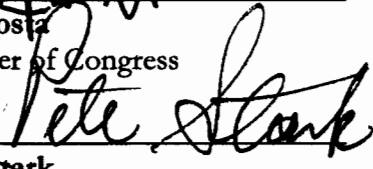

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress


Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

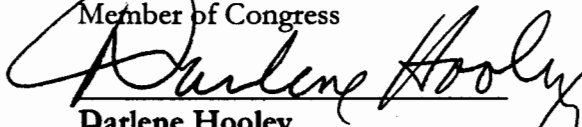
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Page 4



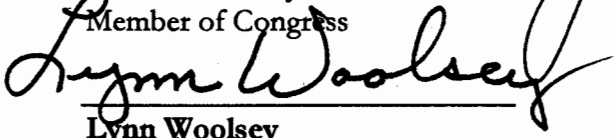
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



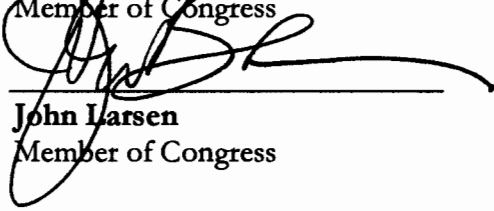
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



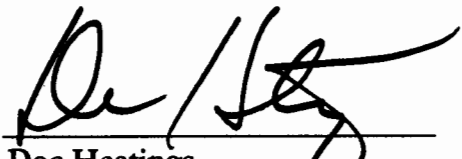
Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress



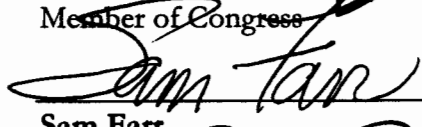
Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress



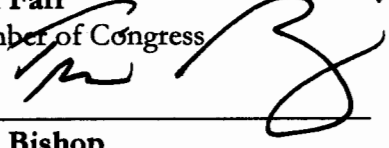
John Larsen
Member of Congress



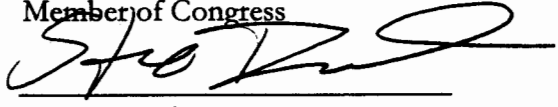
Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress

