



BEER INSTITUTE

## WASHINGTON UPDATE

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**Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Federal Labeling and Advertising Regulations** - On September 26<sup>th</sup>, the Beer Institute filed extensive comments with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), which sought input on numerous issues including the following proposed labeling changes. The Beer Institute believes that none of the proposals below has utility for consumers because no standard drink exists currently, nor could one be discerned from the wide variety and range of alcohol content of thousands of brands in the marketplace.

- Display of alcohol content in terms of “fluid ounces” of pure alcohol in the body of what appears to be a nutritional label---Alcohol is not a nutrient, and TTB’s longstanding and straightforward policy of disclosing alcohol by volume should not be subverted by fractional measurements requiring complex calculation.
- The graphic depiction of a beer mug, a wine glass, and a large shot glass with equal signs between the glasses and fractional numbers inside and below the glasses---This approach is a new variant of “equalization,” a hard liquor industry political advocacy message that has no place in labels or advertisements.
- The concept of a government sanctioned “standard drink”---This effort is simply a text version of the equalization graphic, and it is equally misleading given the wide variation among distilled spirits products and even among products in the wine and beer category.

In addition to the formal Beer Institute comments, Beer Institute staff and Washington representatives of our member-companies worked to educate members of the House and Senate on these issues. 100 Members of Congress and 15 Senators signed letters to TTB Administrator John Manfreda in support of the Beer Institute position. Many individual brewers, beer wholesalers, and others also sent similar comments to TTB.

**BI Hosts Hill Reception** - The Beer Institute held its annual fall Capitol Hill kick-off reception on September 29<sup>th</sup> as the House and Senate enter the peak period of legislative activity. The event was a huge success with over 800 staff attending, including dozens of Members of Congress. The event gives Beer Institute staff and member company representatives the opportunity to meet with Members of Congress and staff in an informal setting to discuss issues that affect the brewing industry.

**Rollback Legislation** – The Beer Tax Rollback Legislation, H.R. 1306 and S. 722, continue to garner cosponsors. Both bills enjoy bipartisan support. H.R. 1306 now has 151 cosponsors, and S. 722 has eight. All Beer Institute members are encouraged to contact their Representatives and Senators to request that they become cosponsors of the Beer Tax Rollback legislation. Please contact Rick Goddard if you would like message points to discuss the rollback effort with your federal representatives.