

December 17, 2003

Honorable Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

Yesterday, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and National Consumers League, joined by dozens of organizations around the country and four deans of schools of public health, petitioned the Tax and Trade Bureau of the Department of Treasury to require consistent calorie and ingredient labeling of all alcoholic beverages. We believe that those and the other modest label improvements we requested would greatly assist your efforts to combat current epidemic levels of obesity and help moderate alcohol consumption among consumers concerned about their health.


We are writing today to urge you and your Department, in particular the Food and Drug Administration, to support the implementation of a standardized "alcohol facts" label on all alcoholic beverages. We hope you will use your visible leadership on health issues within the Administration to encourage the Treasury Department to adopt regulations that would require the addition of calorie, ingredient, alcohol content, and serving-size information on all containers of alcoholic beverages sold in this country. As the FDA has repeatedly recognized, such labeling would provide important public health information. In addition, we also request that you encourage the Treasury Department to require on all alcoholic beverages the *Dietary Guidelines'* definition of moderate alcohol consumption.

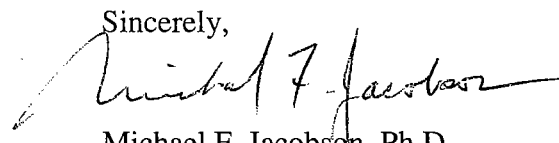
The Food and Drug Administration, which has substantial authority, expertise, and experience in labeling food, dietary supplement, and some alcoholic-beverage products, has a long history of collaboration with the Treasury Department on health issues related to the labeling (e.g., adulteration, sulfites, Yellow Dye #5, and health claims) and advertising of



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alcoholic beverages. We strongly urge you to continue this collaboration to provide consumers with useful and necessary information about alcoholic beverages, which are a major source of calories for millions of Americans.


George A. Hacker
Director, Alcohol Policies

Sincerely,

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc. Mark McClellan, M.D.