

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.

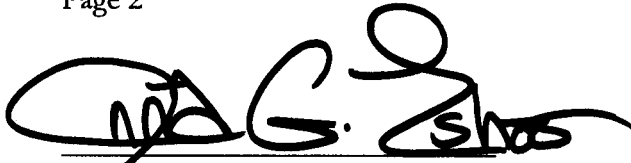


MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

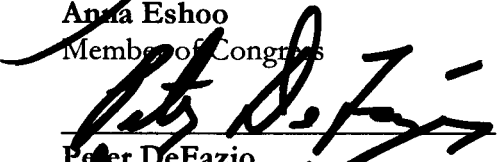
Sincerely,



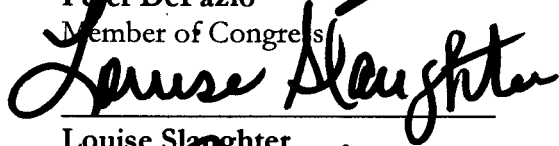
GEORGE RADANOVICH
Member of Congress



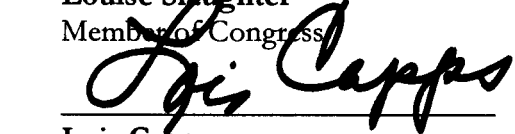
Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



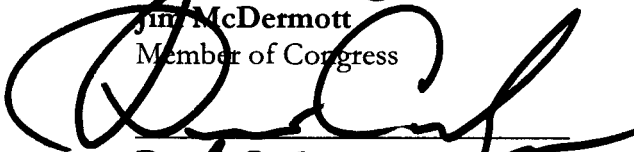
Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress



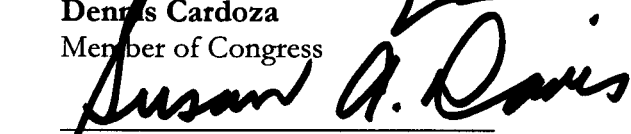
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



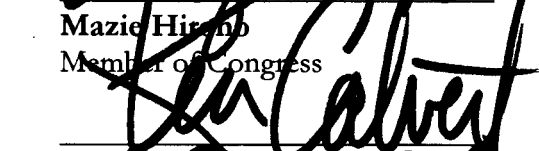
Dennis Cardoza
Member of Congress



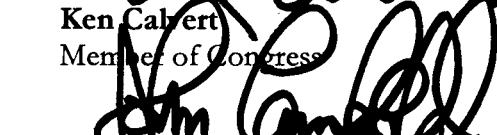
Susan Davis
Member of Congress



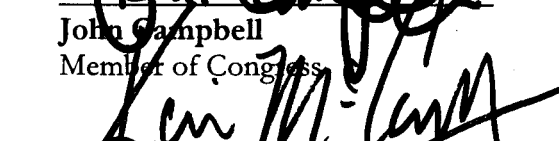
Mazie Hirono
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Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



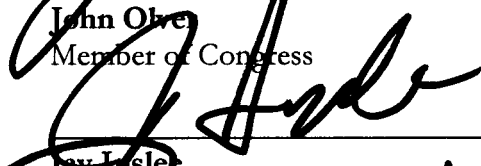
John Campbell
Member of Congress



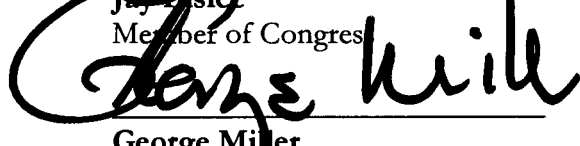
Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress



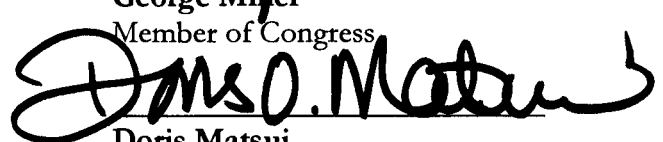
John Oliver
Member of Congress



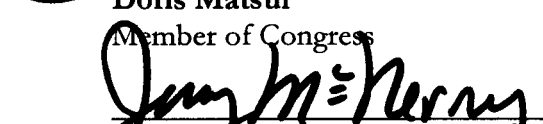
Jay Inslee
Member of Congress



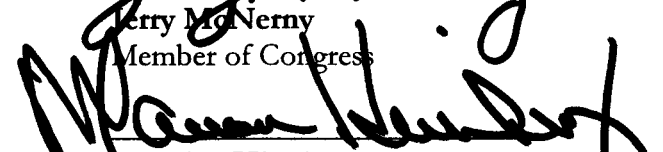
George Miller
Member of Congress



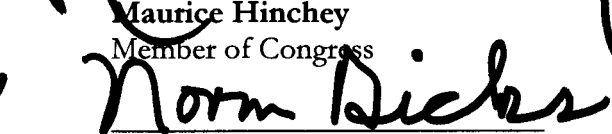
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



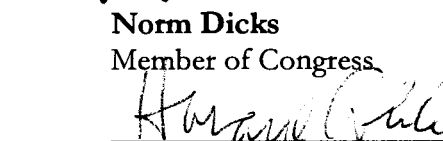
Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



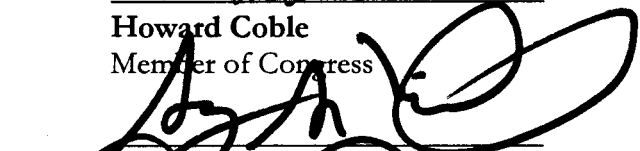
Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



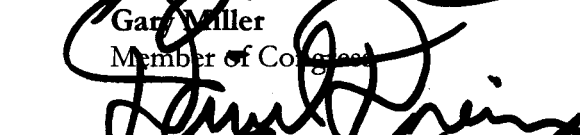
Norm Dicks
Member of Congress



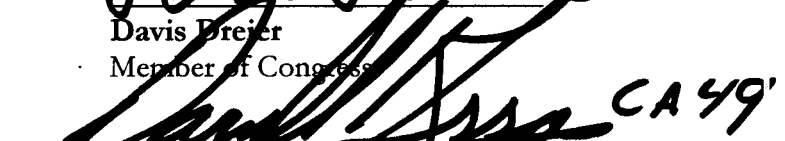
Howard Coble
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Gary Miller
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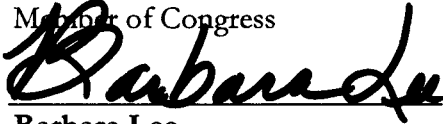
Davis Breier
Member of Congress



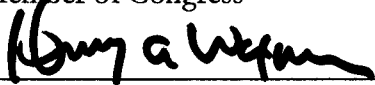
Darrell Issa
Member of Congress



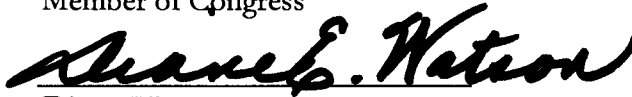
Michael Honda
Member of Congress



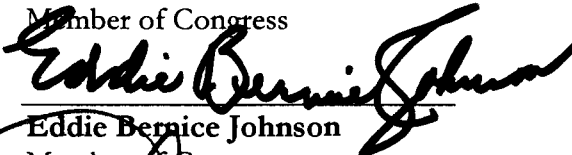
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



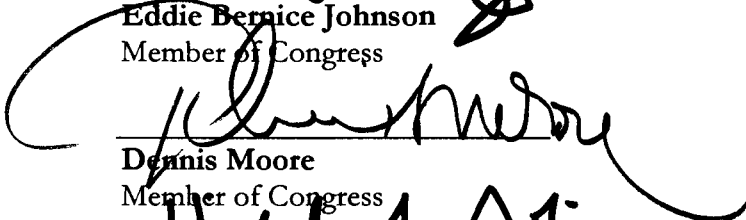
Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



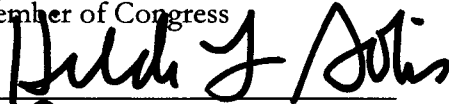
Diane Watson
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



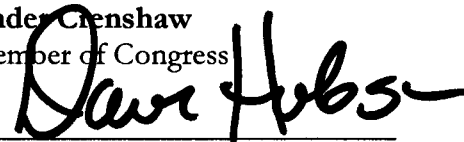
Dennis Moore
Member of Congress



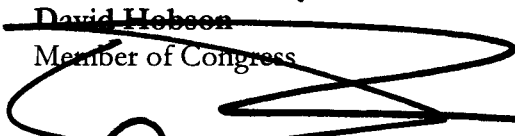
Hilda Solis
Member of Congress



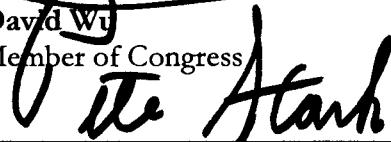
Ander Crenshaw
Member of Congress




David Hobson
Member of Congress



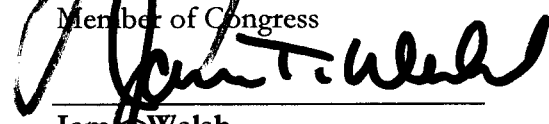
David Wu
Member of Congress



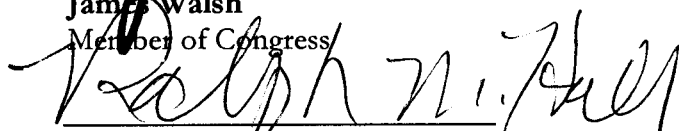
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



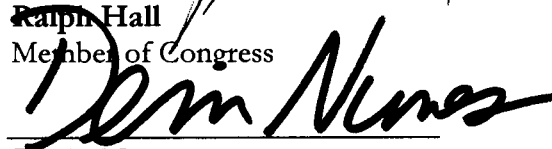
Jerry Lewis
Member of Congress



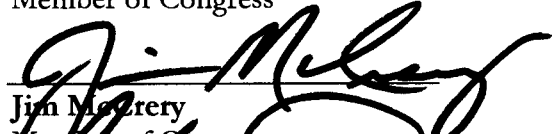
James Walsh
Member of Congress



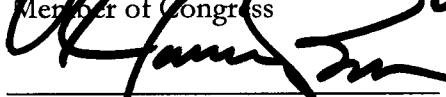
Ralph Hall
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Devin Nunes
Member of Congress



Jim McCreery
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



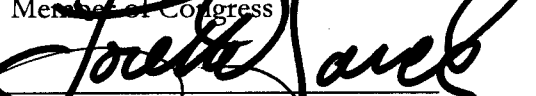
Bud Cramer
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Kirsten Gillibrand
Member of Congress



Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress

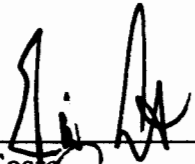


Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

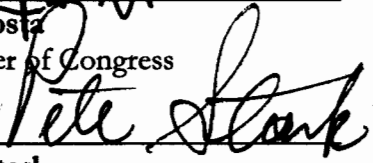


Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

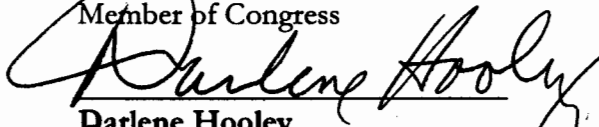
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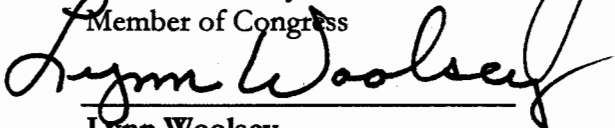
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



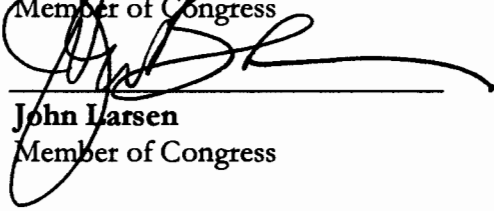
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



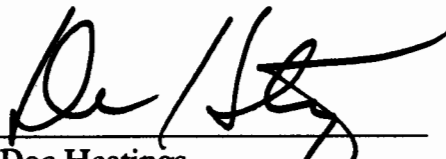
Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress



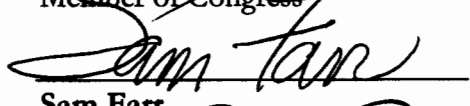
Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress



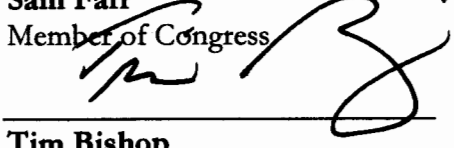
John Larsen
Member of Congress



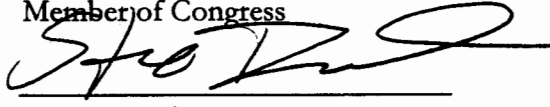
Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress

