

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

John Manfreda
Administrator
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
1310 G Street NW Box 12
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Administrator Manfreda:

We write today on behalf of several vineyard and winery owners who operate within the wine growing region of Oregon's Van Duzer Corridor. They expressed interest in ensuring movement on a petition to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) to designate the Corridor as an American Viticulture Area (AVA). According to the TTB's website, the petition received "accepted as perfected" status from the TTB on July 22, 2015, but the application has remained stagnant since that time.

Our understanding is that an AVA designation bestows tremendous advantage to the small businesses established in that area. Operating under the AVA umbrella confers a certain amount of stature that enables businesses to better promote their products at the marketplace and stabilize the financial longevity of their wine endeavors. The success that follows is good for businesses and the economic health of the state.

From what we understand, after a petition is received by TTB and is "accepted as perfected," the next step is a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) published in the Federal Register. The entire petition process for the Van Duzer Corridor began five years ago and, for at least the past two and a half years, has stalled in the "accepted as perfected" stage without progress toward publication. It has also been brought to our attention that the Petaluma Gap AVA, which was accepted as perfected after the Van Duzer Corridor, received its AVA designation on December 7, 2017.

Our offices know that TTB does great work with minimal staffing and we appreciate the time and effort TTB staff have put into responding to our inquiries regarding this AVA petition thus far. At this time, we wish to inquire as to the circumstances that are delaying further progress of this petition as well as whether there is a timeline for completion. Please see the below questions:

1. Specifically, is TTB restrained from publishing this rulemaking as a result of President Trump's Executive Order 13771, directing all agencies to repeal at least two existing regulations for each newly issued regulation?
2. Are there other issues constraining the Agency for which our offices or the applicants can be of assistance?
3. Is there a timeline for completion for this AVA?

Please consider these concerns in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and know that we stand ready to assist the TTB as needed. We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and response to our inquiry.

Sincerely,



KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress



RON WYDEN
U.S. Senator



JEFFREY MERKLEY
U.S. Senator



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



SUZANNE BONAMICI
Member of Congress