



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0523

August 20, 2020

Ms. Mary G. Ryan
Administrator
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
1310 G Street, NW, Box 12
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Administrator Ryan:

I write in strong support of the petition (Docket ID: TTB-2020-0006-0001) submitted by Ms. Julie Bell, on behalf of vineyard owners in Tehachapi, California, which I represent, to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) to establish the Tehachapi Mountains American Viticultural Area (AVA).

The City of Tehachapi and surrounding region are in the Tehachapi Mountains, and given the proximity to both Bakersfield and Los Angeles, California, makes the region a tourist destination for many who want to escape from the bustle of city life and dry heat of the valley or desert for various outdoor activities and festivals. While this region has been at the forefront of wind energy generation, Tehachapi is now seeing a new and expanding winemaking industry, which started in 2006 and has grown to seven vineyards, that grow multiple varieties of winegrapes, and two local wineries. Over the years, many wines produced in Tehachapi have received best in class, double gold, gold, silver, or bronze awards at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition and the Los Angeles International Wine Competition.

The proposed Tehachapi Mountains AVA is supported by the Tehachapi Wine Growers Commission, the Greater Tehachapi Economic Development Council, Kern County Supervisor Zach Scrivner, and the Tehachapi City Council, among others. If this petition is granted, the Tehachapi Mountains AVA would encompass approximately 58,000 acres at an elevation ranging between 3,600 feet and 5,400 feet above sea level. Unlike other high elevation areas that are generally not suitable for growing winegrapes due to cold temperatures, the Tehachapi region has unique topography that allows warm air from California's Central Valley and the Mojave Desert to travel into the area creating warm days and cool nights, making it uniquely suitable for growing quality winegrapes. I am also told that if this petition is granted, the Tehachapi Mountains AVA would be one of the highest elevation AVAs in the country. In addition, designating the Tehachapi Mountains AVA would place my constituents on equal footing with some of the most renowned AVAs in the State of California by allowing them to market their product with a specific appellation of origin label. I believe this would not only be a source of

pride for our community, but also help attract attention to this new and growing wine region, thereby increasing tourism and creating jobs at the vineyards, winemaking facilities, and local tasting rooms.

My understanding is that the Tehachapi vineyards owners' petition contains the necessary information consistent with the criteria required by the TTB for an American Viticultural Area designation. Accordingly, I strongly support the petition submitted by Ms. Bell and the local Tehachapi vineyard owners to the TTB to create the Tehachapi Mountains AVA. This designation will not only enhance our local community, but also further demonstrate that California remains one of the top, quality wine-producing states in the United States. Therefore, I respectfully request your careful and thorough consideration of this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

KEVIN McCARTHY
House Republican Leader