



## Consumer Federation of America

Statement of Chris Waldrop,  
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My name is Chris Waldrop and I am the Director of the Food Policy Institute at Consumer Federation of America. CFA joined National Consumers League and 75 other consumer and public health organizations in 2003 in petitioning the TTB to require an easy-to-read, standardized “Alcohol Facts” label. This would be similar to the “Nutrition Facts” label on foods and nonalcoholic beverages....and I’ve brought some packaging here with me today so you can see what we’re talking about... it would be similar to the “Drug Facts” label on over-the-counter drugs....and similar to the “Supplement Facts” label on dietary supplements. These labels are all standardized. They are easy to use and read and understand. Most consumers are familiar with these Fact Panels and many consumers use them on a regular basis.

The only consumer product which lacks a label is alcoholic beverages. We’ll hear later some of the public health reasons why a standardized label is important for consumers, so I won’t go into that now. But it is important that this information is mandatory so that all consumers who drink alcoholic beverages are provided this information. The information should also be standardized as the Nutrition Facts or Drug Facts are so that consumers are presented with the same information in the same way no

matter what alcoholic beverage they consumer. The information should be presented in a single place on the label and not scattered throughout the label, making it difficult for consumers to track down.

I now want to highlight what we believe should be included on an Alcohol Facts label. First and foremost, the Alcohol Facts label should provide consumers with information about...alcohol content. TTB agreed in its July 2007 Federal Register notice and said that “the alcohol content of a beverage is one of the most important pieces of information about the product.” But bizarrely, the TTB’s proposal does not require information about alcohol content on its proposed Alcohol Facts label, the most obvious place for such information. Alcohol content is the most relevant information to consumers of alcoholic beverages and it should be placed prominently on the Alcohol Facts label. The label should include the serving size in fluid ounces (12 fl. oz. for beer, 5 fl.oz. for wine and 1.5 fl.oz. for distilled spirits) and amount of alcohol per serving, so that consumers can compare the quantity of alcohol contained in single servings of different products. The label should also include the percent alcohol by volume.

The label should prominently include the number of calories per serving as alcohol is a significant source of calories and this information is important for consumers who are watching their caloric intake. In addition, the label should provide information on the amount of carbohydrates, protein and fat per serving. And an ingredient list should be included listing each ingredient by its common name and identifying any major

food allergens present in the product. This is something we're all familiar with from the Nutrition Facts label.

Finally, the label should include the definition of a “standard drink” and the number of standard drinks per container. The definition of a “standard drink” is well known throughout the federal government and public health community. The Dietary Guidelines define a standard drink as the amount of any given beverage that contains 0.6 fluid ounces of pure alcohol. This definition has been used for years and translates to 12 fl.oz. of beer, 5 fl.oz of wine and 1.5 fl.oz of 80-proof distilled spirits.

Providing this information will also help consumers follow the Dietary Guidelines advice on alcohol consumption which advises consumers on the number of drinks they should consume per day. This advice should be included *directly on* the Alcohol Facts label. Requiring such a statement is a perfect public health opportunity to educate consumers about the importance of safe and healthy alcohol consumption.

CFA joins National Consumers League, MADD, the National Medical Association, Shape-Up America! and other groups in urging the TTB to provide consumers with a standardized mandatory Alcohol Facts panel. It is unfortunate that it has taken the federal government over 30 years to provide consumers with this important information. And we hope that consumers will see these labels on alcoholic beverages very soon. Thank you.