

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Kerins [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2005 7:56 PM
To: Rulemaking, TTB
Subject: 'TTB Notice No. 47'

name=Michael Kerins
name=Yakima County Planning
Address1=128 N. 2nd Street
Address2=Fourth Floor, Courthouse
City=Yakima
State=WA
Zip Code=98901

Comments=I strongly support this application. The approval of this viticultural area will significantly assist Yakima County in planning for future economic development opportunities related to the wine making industry. Any consideration in this respect is greatly appreciated.

-----Original Message-----

From: Patrick Rawn [mailto:████████████████████]

Sent: Thursday, July 07, 2005 1:31 PM

To: Rulemaking, TTB

Subject: Rattlesnake Hills AVA

I think proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA a great idea. From what I have tasted that area of Washington has very distinctive wines across the board. I am glad this has finally come up as I have thought there to be difference for some time. I hope you approve this proposition.

Patrick T. Rawn

7/1/05

Comment 3

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)
nprm@ttb.gov

Dear Sir/Madame:

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 104:

1. Rattlesnake Hills Name: The USGS maps for Yakima and Walla Walla (scale 1:250,000) clearly show that the Rattlesnake Hills is a range of mountains that extends from approximately 121:30 west longitude to 119:30 west longitude. This is well beyond the east boundary (120:00 west longitude) for the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. In addition, historical and current local use for the name Rattlesnake Hills applies to a range of mountains that delineates the north boundary of the entire Yakima Valley, including to its extreme east end. The tallest peak in this range, locally referred to as Rattlesnake Mountain, is located to the east of the proposed east boundary line. Finally, when ATF published the Yakima Valley AVA (Federal Register: Vol. 48, No. 65) on April 4, 1983, it used the Rattlesnake Hills crest to delineate its northern boundary from Wapato Dam in the west to Red Mountain in the east where the Yakima River runs north between the Rattlesnake Hills and Red Mountain (119:30 west longitude). For these reasons, the use of the Rattlesnake Hills name should not be permitted for the name of the proposed AVA because it is not consistent with published and local use of that geographical feature and is not unique to the proposed boundaries of the appellation.
2. Boundaries: The east boundary of the appellation (120 west longitude and Bonneville power lines) is artificial and unrelated to any unique geographic, climatic or soil characteristics. The geographic, climatic and soil characteristics are the same on both sides of the boundary and in fact continue east many miles to Red Mountain.
3. Climatic Differences:
 - a. Heat Units: The proposed AVA cites heat unit differences between various neighboring WSU-PAWS weather stations inside and outside of the proposed AVA as justification for climatic uniqueness. In fact, the difference of 200 to 300 heat units between stations within the proposed AVA (2683 and 2870) and the cooler WSU stations in Prosser (2552 and 2554) and the warmer stations (Parker to the west and Badger Canyon to the east) are simply not significant or

defining. Year to year fluctuation in heat units for individual stations can be 200-300 units as evidenced by comparing annual data for these stations in 1998 and 1999. These differences simply illustrate the effects of varying local topographies and agriculture, elevations and micro climates over the wide area covered by the PAWS network. In fact, the cited differences in heat units argue against their uniqueness because of the large amount of variation throughout the Yakima Valley and in the vicinity of the proposed appellation. Why is one of the warmest weather stations outside of the appellation only one mile away and the coolest station only two miles away?

- b. Winter Cold: The claim that the proposed Rattlesnake AVA is protected from arctic air masses and cold temperature vine damage is simply not true. During the last two cold events (1996 and 2004), vineyards located inside the proposed AVA sustained as much damage as Yakima Valley vineyards located outside of the AVA. Cold damage in the Yakima Valley is primarily an elevation effect, with higher elevation sites consistently showing higher temperatures and lower damage regardless of the neighboring terrain. Damage is consistently higher below the 850 foot contour than above it. This is the reason why the vast majority of vineyards and fruit orchards in the entire Yakima Valley, along with spring frost avoidance, are planted between the 850 and 1300 foot elevation contours.
- 4. Soil Types: The petition claims that the soils within the proposed AVA are unique to the AVA and `seldom found elsewhere within the Yakima Valley area. That is simply not true. The soil surveys for Benton and Yakima Counties clearly show that there is a band of common soils that run the length of the north side of the Yakima Valley from Union Gap to Red Mountain. The primary soil types between 500 and 2000 feet elevation are silt loams derived from wind deposited soils (loess), that are level to moderately steep, shallow to moderately deep, well drained with a mean annual temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and annual precipitation between six and 12 inches. These soils typically are underlain by a calcareous hardpan (caliche), which is in turn underlain by basalt. They include Warden Silt loam, which accounts for over 60% of the soils in the 500 to 2000 foot elevations, with lesser amounts of Shano, Burke, Esquatzel and Kiona silt loams. Again, there is absolutely nothing unique about the soils used for grape growing within the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA compared to the rest of the Yakima Valley.
- 5. Wine Labeling: As indicated in the proposal, there is only a little more than 1000 acres of wine grapes within the proposed boundaries and only about 17 wineries. However, the Yakima Valley AVA contains at least 10,000 acres of wine grapes, most of which are grown in the vicinity of the Rattlesnake Hills east of the proposed AVA boundaries and under the same geographic, climatic and soils conditions detailed in the Rattlesnake Hills proposal. In addition, there are another 30 wineries within the Yakima Valley and 280 wineries within Washington State, many of

which utilize grapes from the Yakima Valley, but outside of the proposed appellation. By approving the Rattlesnake Hills appellation as proposed, TTB would be depriving these many growers and wineries from using the Rattlesnake Hills designation for their grapes and on their wine labels.

For these reasons the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Appellation do not meet the standards established by the ATF and should not be permitted. The name is too restrictive for the limited area of the appellation and the claimed distinctive geographic, climatic and soils characteristics cannot be supported by fact.

Respectfully,

Colin Monell - Lonesome Spring Ranch
Brenton Roy - Oasis Farms Inc.

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to submit comment with regards to the proposed AVA Rattlesnake Hills in Washington State. I oppose the acceptance of this proposal on the following grounds.

- 1) The boundaries of the proposed AVA are arbitrary. A highway and a powerline are not meaningful geophysical boundaries.
- 2) The climate, geology, soils and general growing conditions within the proposed AVA are not significantly different from surrounding areas.
- 3) The name, Rattlesnake Hills, describes a landform that extends far beyond the artificial boundaries of the proposed AVA.

In summation, the only advantage that might result from the approval of this proposal, would be some subjective marketing advantage to be gained by producers within the boundaries. The Washington State wine industry would in fact be weakened if this illegitimate AVA were to be approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment.

Tedd Wildman
Viticulturist and Wine Grape Grower


Prosser, WA 99350

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525
(fax) nprm@ttb.gov

Dear Sir/Madame:

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 104:

1. Rattlesnake Hills Name: The USGS maps for Yakima and Walla Walla (scale 1:250,000) clearly show that the Rattlesnake Hills is a range of mountains that extends from approximately 121:30 west longitude to 119:30 west longitude. This is well beyond the east boundary (120:00 west longitude) for the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. In addition, historical and current local use for the name Rattlesnake Hills applies to a range of mountains that delineates the north boundary of the entire Yakima Valley, including to its extreme east end. The tallest peak in this range, locally referred to as Rattlesnake Mountain, is located to the east of the proposed east boundary line. Finally, when ATF published the Yakima Valley AVA (Federal Register: Vol. 48, No. 65) on April 4, 1983, it used the Rattlesnake Hills crest to delineate its northern boundary from Wapato Dam in the west to Red Mountain in the east where the Yakima River runs north between the Rattlesnake Hills and Red Mountain (119:30 west longitude). For these reasons, the use of the Rattlesnake Hills name should not be permitted for the name of the proposed AVA because it is not consistent with published and local use of that geographical feature and is not unique to the proposed boundaries of the appellation.
2. Boundaries: The east boundary of the appellation (120 west longitude and Bonneville power lines) is artificial and unrelated to any unique geographic, climatic or soil characteristics. The geographic, climatic and soil characteristics are the same on both sides of the boundary and in fact continue east many miles to Red Mountain.
3. Soil Series: The petition claims that the soils within the proposed AVA are unique to the AVA and 'seldom found elsewhere within the Yakima Valley area'. That is simply not true. Soil surveys for Benton and Yakima Counties clearly show that there is a contiguous band of common soils that run the length of the north side of the Yakima Valley from Union Gap to Red Mountain. The majority of the soil series found between 500 and 2000 feet elevation are loess derived silt loams, level to moderately steep, shallow to moderately deep, well drained with a mean annual temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and annual precipitation between six and 12 inches. These soils typically are

underlain by a calcareous hardpan (caliche), which is in turn underlain by basalt. They are dominated by Warden Silt loam, which accounts for over 60% of the soils in the 500 to 2000 foot elevations, with lesser amounts of Burke (nearly identical to Warden but more shallow), Esquatzel, Kiona and Shano silt loams. Thus, there is no uniqueness to the viticultural soils within the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA when considered relative to the rest of the Yakima Valley.

4. Climatic Differences:

a. Heat Units: The proposed AVA cites heat unit differences between various neighboring WSU-PAWS weather stations inside and outside of the proposed AVA as justification for climatic uniqueness. In fact, the difference of 200 to 300 heat units between stations within the proposed AVA (2683 and 2870) and the cooler WSU stations in Prosser (2552 and 2554) and the warmer stations (Parker to the west and Badger Canyon to the east) are simply not significant or defining. Year to year fluctuation in heat units for individual stations can be 200-300 units as evidenced by comparing annual data for these stations in 1998 and 1999. These differences simply illustrate the effects of varying local topographies and agriculture, elevations and micro climates over the wide area covered by the PAWS network. In fact, the cited differences in heat units argue against their uniqueness because of the large amount of variation throughout the Yakima Valley and in the vicinity of the proposed appellation. Why is one of the warmest weather stations outside of the appellation only one mile away and the coolest station only two miles away? An alternative approach to ranking climatic conditions, referred to as the Latitude-Temperature Index (LTI, D. Jackson and D. Schuster. 2001. The production of grapes and wine in cool climates. Gypsum Press, Wellington, N.Z.) classifies the proposed region well within the range of the warm (LTI 270-380) climatic zone.

b. Winter Cold: The claim that the proposed Rattlesnake AVA is protected from arctic air masses and cold temperature vine damage is simply not true. During the last two cold events (1996 and 2004), vineyards located inside the proposed AVA sustained as much damage as Yakima Valley vineyards located outside of the AVA. Cold damage in the Yakima Valley is primarily an elevation effect, with higher elevation sites consistently showing higher temperatures and lower damage regardless of the neighboring terrain. Damage is consistently higher below the 850 foot contour than above it. This is the reason why the vast majority of vineyards and fruit orchards in the entire Yakima Valley, along with spring frost avoidance, are planted between the 850 and 1300 foot elevation contours.

5. Wine Labeling: As indicated in the proposal, there are little more than 1000 acres of wine grapes within the proposed boundaries and only about 17 wineries. However, the Yakima Valley AVA contains at least 10,000 acres of wine grapes, most of which are grown in the vicinity of the Rattlesnake Hills east of the

proposed AVA boundaries and under the same geographic, climatic and soils conditions detailed in the Rattlesnake Hills proposal. In addition, there are another 30 wineries within the Yakima Valley and 280 wineries within Washington State, many of which utilize grapes from the Yakima Valley, but outside of the proposed appellation. By approving the Rattlesnake Hills appellation as proposed, TTB would be depriving these many growers and wineries from using the Rattlesnake Hills designation for their grapes and on their wine labels.

For these reasons the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Appellation do not meet the standards established by the ATF and should not be permitted. The name is too restrictive for the limited area of the appellation and the claimed distinctive geographic, climatic and soils characteristics cannot be supported by fact.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joan R. Davenport". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joan R. Davenport, Ph.D.

Certified Professional Soil Scientist

R & D on Demand


Prosser, WA 99350

Dear Sir/Madame:

I have a Ph.D. from the University of California at Davis and am a 27 year veteran of the Washington State wine industry. I have worked for Ste. Michelle Estates and Hogue Cellars in management positions, I have been a Washington State vineyard and winery consultant, and currently co-own and manage Thurston Wolfe Winery, LLC in Prosser, WA. While at Ste. Michelle I was involved in the preparation of the Columbia Valley viticultural area proposal. My comments below address concerns I have about the proposed Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area as posted in Notice No. 47 on the TTB web site.

1. Use of the name Rattlesnake Hills: The Rattlesnake Hills is a prominent range of hills that defines the north boundary of the Yakima Valley viticultural area and it extends well beyond the proposed eastern boundary of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area (120 west longitude). These hills are not unique to the proposed appellation and its use would be inappropriate and unfair to the growers that farm many thousands of acres of wine grapes at the base of the Hills but outside of the proposed boundaries. (See the USGS 1:250,000 scale maps for Yakima and Walla Walla.) Some other name should be used if restricted to the proposed boundaries.
2. East boundary of the proposed viticultural area: The use of the 120 west longitude and the Bonneville power lines for the east boundary of the proposed viticultural area is arbitrary and not related to any definable differences in soil, climate or geography to either side of this boundary. It would be more appropriate to extend the east boundary to the 119:30 west longitude where the Yakima River turns north and cuts through the Rattlesnake Hills. This is in fact at the west boundary of the Red Mountain viticultural area where there are definable differences in climate, soils and geography.
3. Climatic differences: Despite the climatic information cited in the appellation proposal to justify the uniqueness of this area, in reality they are not significantly different compared to other areas at the base of the Rattlesnake Hills outside of the proposed boundaries. Heat units vary with local topography, wind movement and elevation and a difference of a few hundred heat units from one weather station to another over several miles is not significant. Inspection of heat unit data from these stations show each can vary from year to year by as large amount as the differences cited between the stations. And 10-year averages are simply not long enough to establish a creditable pattern. Regarding winter damage, the statement that the vineyards within the proposed appellation boundaries experience less damage than vineyards outside the boundaries is simply not true. Cold temperatures and winter damage in the Yakima Valley are primarily a function of elevation and slope. For a given elevation and slope, those vineyards inside the proposed appellation sustained as much damage as Yakima Valley vineyards outside of it.

4. Soil type differences: Despite the claims of the proposal, the Yakima and Benton County soil surveys clearly show that there is a continuum of soil types along the base of the Rattlesnake Hills from the west end of the Yakima Valley to the east end where it encounters Red Mountain. These soils are predominantly silt loams formed by wind deposition (loess), show similar variations in depth and slope along the length of the Valley, and generally have very similar structural and mineral characteristics. Any differences in soil types are primarily related to elevation rather than any kind of east-west geographical distribution. Again, these soil characteristics would argue that the Rattlesnake Hills appellation should be extended east to Red Mountain and potentially west to the foothills of the Cascades.

Respectfully,

Wade Wolfe

Thurston Wolfe Winery, LLC

117302 W. McCreddie Rd.

Prosser, WA 99350

[REDACTED]

509-786-1996 (fax)

509-786-3313 (winery)

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Bill & Jill denHoed [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, July 18, 2005 10:19 PM

To: Rulemaking, TTB

Subject: Proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA Comments

Importance: High

7/20/05

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)
nprm@ttb.gov

Dear Sir/Madame:

My name is William denHoed. I have been cultivating vinifera grapes for wine since 1979 on the foothills of the Rattlesnake Hills. I am located north of Grandview Washington, above the Roza Canal, on the very foothills of the Rattlesnake Hills. My family and I are currently farming over 1000 acres of premium vinifera grapes for wine for several prestigious, well known Washington wineries. I have been farming one of the vineyards since 1987 under the name "Rattlesnake Acres" and in 2001 started operating the same vineyard under the name of "Rattlesnake Vineyards LLC". These are general background comments.

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 104:

1. Rattlesnake Hills Name: The USGS maps for Yakima and Walla Walla (scale 1:250,000) clearly show that the Rattlesnake Hills is a range of mountains that extends from approximately 121:30 west longitude to 119:30 west longitude. This is well beyond the east boundary (120:00 west longitude) for the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. In addition, historical and current local use for the name Rattlesnake Hills applies to a range of mountains that delineates the north boundary of the entire Yakima Valley, including to its extreme east end. The tallest peak in this range, locally referred to as Rattlesnake Mountain, is located to the east of the proposed east boundary line. Finally, when ATF published the Yakima Valley AVA (Federal Register: Vol. 48, No. 65) on April 4, 1983, it used the Rattlesnake Hills crest to delineate its northern boundary from Wapato Dam in the west to Red Mountain in the east where the Yakima River runs north between the Rattlesnake Hills and Red Mountain (119:30 west longitude). For these reasons, the use of the Rattlesnake

Hills name should not be permitted for the name of the proposed AVA because it is not consistent with published and local use of that geographical feature and is not unique to the proposed boundaries of the appellation.

2. Boundaries: The east boundary of the appellation (120 west longitude and Bonneville power lines) is artificial and unrelated to any unique geographic, climatic or soil characteristics. The geographic, climatic and soil characteristics are the same on both sides of the boundary and in fact continue east many miles to Red Mountain.
3. Climatic Differences:
 - a. Heat Units: The proposed AVA cites heat unit differences between various neighboring WSU-PAWS weather stations inside and outside of the proposed AVA as justification for climatic uniqueness. In fact, the difference of 200 to 300 heat units between stations within the proposed AVA (2683 and 2870) and the cooler WSU stations in Prosser (2552 and 2554) and the warmer stations (Parker to the west and Badger Canyon to the east) are simply not significant or defining. Year to year fluctuation in heat units for individual stations can be 200-300 units as evidenced by comparing annual data for these stations in 1998 and 1999. These differences simply illustrate the effects of varying local topographies and agriculture, elevations and micro climates over the wide area covered by the PAWS network. In fact, the cited differences in heat units argue against their uniqueness because of the large amount of variation throughout the Yakima Valley and in the vicinity of the proposed appellation. Why is one of the warmest weather stations outside of the appellation only one mile away and the coolest station only two miles away?
 - b. Winter Cold: The claim that the proposed Rattlesnake AVA is protected from arctic air masses and cold temperature vine damage is simply not true. During the last two cold events (1996 and 2004), vineyards located inside the proposed AVA sustained as much damage as Yakima Valley vineyards located outside of the AVA. Cold damage in the Yakima Valley is primarily an elevation effect, with higher elevation sites consistently showing higher temperatures and lower damage regardless of the neighboring terrain. Damage is consistently higher below the 850 foot contour than above it. This is the reason why the vast majority of vineyards and fruit orchards in the entire Yakima Valley, along with spring frost avoidance, are planted between the 850 and 1300 foot elevation contours.
4. Soil Types: The petition claims that the soils within the proposed AVA are unique to the AVA and 'seldom found elsewhere within the Yakima Valley area'. That is simply not true. The soil surveys for Benton and Yakima Counties clearly show that there is a band of common soils that run the length of the north side of the Yakima Valley from Union Gap to Red Mountain. The primary soil types between 500 and 2000 feet elevation are silt loams derived from wind deposited soils (loess), that are level to moderately steep, shallow to moderately deep, well drained with a mean

annual temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and annual precipitation between six and 12 inches. These soils typically are underlain by a calcareous hardpan (caliche), which is in turn underlain by basalt. They include Warden Silt loam, which accounts for over 60% of the soils in the 500 to 2000 foot elevations, with lesser amounts of Shano, Burke, Esquatzel and Kiona silt loams. Again, there is absolutely nothing unique about the soils used for grape growing within the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA compared to the rest of the Yakima Valley.

5. Wine Labeling: As indicated in the proposal, there is only a little more than 1000 acres of wine grapes within the proposed boundaries and only about 17 wineries. However, the Yakima Valley AVA contains at least 10,000 acres of wine grapes, most of which are grown in the vicinity of the Rattlesnake Hills east of the proposed AVA boundaries and under the same geographic, climatic and soils conditions detailed in the Rattlesnake Hills proposal. In addition, there are another 30 wineries within the Yakima Valley and 280 wineries within Washington State, many of which utilize grapes from the Yakima Valley, but outside of the proposed appellation. By approving the Rattlesnake Hills appellation as proposed, TTB would be depriving these many growers and wineries from using the Rattlesnake Hills designation for their grapes and on their wine labels.

For these reasons the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Appellation do not meet the standards established by the ATF and should not be permitted. The name is too restrictive for the limited area of the appellation and the claimed distinctive geographic, climatic and soils characteristics cannot be supported by fact.

Respectfully,

William denHoed

20 July 2005

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)
nprm@ttb.gov

Dear Sir/Madam:

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 104:

As a grape grower on Red Mountain am writing to submit comment with regards to the proposed AVA Rattlesnake Hills in Washington State. I oppose the acceptance of this proposal on the following grounds.

- 1) The boundaries of the proposed AVA are arbitrary. A highway and a power line are not meaningful geophysical boundaries.
- 2) The climate, geology, soils and general growing conditions within the proposed AVA are not significantly different from surrounding areas.
- 3) The name, Rattlesnake Hills, describes a landform that extends far beyond the artificial boundaries of the proposed AVA.

The only advantage that might result from the approval of this proposal would be some subjective marketing advantage to be gained by producers within the boundaries. The Washington State wine industry would in fact be weakened if this AVA were to be approved.

For these reasons the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Appellation does not meet the standards established by the ATF and should not be permitted.

Respectfully,

Patricia Gelles - General Partner
Klipsun Vineyards
4636 West Canal Drive
West Richland WA 99353

Phone 509 967 3395
Fax 509 967 4057
Cell 509 521 8591
E-mail grapes@klipsun.com
www.klipsun.com

7/23/05

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47, Federal Register/ Vol. 70, No.104
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)

Dear Sirs,

I strongly oppose the proposed establishment of the "Rattlesnake Hills" viticultural area. I have grown wine grapes in the Yakima Valley for 28 years and my farm is located east of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills area. My vineyards are located at the 800' to 1400' elevation and are generally considered to be on the south slopes of the Rattlesnake Hills in the middle of the Yakima Valley. This point leads to one of my primary objections to the proposed application:

- The virtual capturing of the name Rattlesnake Hills. The proposed application is using a name that is not specific to their area. These Rattlesnake Hills define the northern border of the Yakima Valley Appellation, a viticultural area that was sanctioned by the federal government in 1983. Most of the vineyards in the entire Yakima Valley are grown on a small band of land that lies between 700 to 1400 ft. elevations on the south slopes of the Rattlesnake Hills. This band or strip of suitable vineyard land runs the length of the Yakima Appellation from Union Gap in the west (including the proposed viticultural area) to Red Mountain in the east. In general these vineyards follow the 72,000 acre Roza Irrigation District that irrigates the land above the Sunnyside Irrigation Project. Most of the 11,000 acres that are grown in the Yakima Valley appellation are grown outside of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills area but lie in the virtual shadow of the Rattlesnake Hills.
- Another objection I have to the application is the implication that somehow the proposed Rattlesnake Hills area is a unique and distinguishable growing area separate from the rest of the Yakima Valley; especially in terms of soils, geography and climatic conditions.

Soils: The same types of soil that are identified in the petition are common throughout the prime viticulture areas of the Yakima Valley. These similar soil types can be confirmed by visiting the USDA NRCS website and visiting the soil survey section of the Yakima County and Benton County of Washington State.

The three-soil composition that is mentioned as being common within the proposed Rattlesnake Hill area but *"is seldom found elsewhere in the Yakima Valley region"*,

actually it is found at least as frequently throughout the region, generally at higher elevations. This three-soil composition can be found on Snipes Mountain in the middle of the Yakima Valley, it can easily be found north of Sunnyside and there are sites near my vineyard north of Grandview.

There is also a claim that *“the soil is shallow, which is in contrast to the uniformly deep, silt-loamy and sandy soils found in the balance of the Yakima Valley viticultural area”*.

This statement is at best a generalization, there is as much a variation in the depth and types of soils in the proposed area as there is in the balance of the Yakima Valley viticultural area. I can name numerous shallow vineyard sites within the Yakima Valley with silt-loamy soils and I can name numerous uniformly deep, silt-loamy vineyard sites within the proposed Rattlesnake Hills area.

Topography: The petition refers to the more open and consistent landscape that lies outside of the proposed area; this claim can be easily disputed by visiting many of the steep hilly sites that exist throughout the valley, especially east of the proposed area.

Climate: The weather summary data that is presented from the PAWS network is accurate for what it is but the conclusions presented by the petitioners are not very accurate. The PAWS network was established years ago to collect weather data for numerous crops within the region, mainly tree fruit, the sites do not always correlate to vineyard sites. For example; the two sites that were used to support the claim that *“the areas between the Rattlesnake Hill region and the Red Mountain have much cooler growing seasons”* i.e. Port of Sunnyside and WSU Roza weather stations are both in locations that have very few if any vineyards nearby, they are both in rather low lying areas away from the prime vineyard sites. Many vineyards have their own weather stations, on site, to get accurate degree-day temperatures for their specific site.

The Canadian-Polar air that is mentioned in the petition or any other weather anomaly visits the proposed area just as frequently as the rest of the Yakima Valley growing area. This can be confirmed by visiting with long term growers in the area, county extension agents, crop insurance agents or local federal crop disaster program administrators.


In general the soils, geography, topography and climate in the proposed area mirror the rest of the viticultural area of the Yakima Valley along the slopes of the Rattlesnake Hills.


- In conclusion it is my opinion that to grant this petition, as presented, would do a disservice to the appellation system as it exists. This petition has not made the case that the proposed Rattlesnake Hills area is a distinct growing area unlike any in the Yakima Valley. To my knowledge I have not heard consumers, the media, or vintners attach unique attributes to wines made from grapes grown in this proposed area, other than from individual vineyards or wineries. I know of no regional style, specific variety or type of wine that is unique to this proposed area. The granting of this proposal would confuse consumers and undermine the existing Yakima Valley Appellation that currently exists. I would be more

supportive of this petition, especially since I have sold grapes to many of the wineries within the proposed area for 20 years, if they had expanded the boundaries of the proposal to include those growing areas that lie across the northern border of the Yakima Valley along the base of the Rattlesnakes, this would be more inclusive and representative of the growing area. But on the other hand these vineyards currently define the existing appellation which is the Yakima Valley viticultural area.

Sincerely,

Richard Boushey
Boushey Vineyards
4313 N. County Line Rd.
Grandview, WA 98930



name=chris camarda
name=andrew will winery
Address1=
Address2=
City=vashon
State=wa
Zip Code=98070

Comments=The name Rattlesnake Hills or any variation of it is a terrible name for any winery or activity in the wine world. I will never use it on my label. If nothing better can be found to describe the area than the word rattlesnake then the area should go nameless. It would be better to call it the Clown Hills or perhaps Gabby Hayes Hills.

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
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Dear Sir/Madame:

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticulture area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70 No.104:

- 1.) The boundaries of the proposed AVA are Arbitrary and not based upon any meaningful geophysical boundaries.
- 2.) The name Rattlesnake Hills describes an area larger than the proposed the artificial boundaries of the proposed AVA.
- 3.) The climate, geology, soils and general growing condition within the proposed area do not vary significantly from the surrounding areas.

In closing, it would it is apparent that this is not a defined growing area any more distinct than its surrounding area, and seems to be more of a marketing proposal than a true distinct AVA. We see a detrimental effect upon the Washington State Wine Industry to allow such and arbitrary drawing of AVA lines.

Respectfully,

Mark Tudor
Tom Tudor
Tudor Hills Vineyards Inc.
Growers of Quality Washington Wine Grapes.

name=Joel Tefft
name=Tefft Cellars, LLC
Address1=
Address2=
City=Outlook
State=WA
Zip Code=98938

Comments=Dear Sirs,

We would like to offer our support for the approval of the Rattlesnake Hills AVA being formed in Washington State. We own Tefft Cellars and farm 10 acres of vinifera in the proposed appellation. We are three-fourths of a mile west of the Eastern boundary and have had vinifera growing here successfully for 15 years. We attempted to grow 15 acres of vinifera just one-half mile east of the proposed boundary and failed due to extremes in temperature during the winter and fall.

We feel the new appellation is distinctly different from the rest of Yakima Valley. First, because of the climatic and geographic differences; and second, because most of the wineries are small, family owned businesses, who grow their own grapes and are small enough to give visitors a great look at the lifestyle of this area. In addition, our county government is seeing this and opening up more opportunity within the Rattlesnake Hills area for tourism and wine related activities and business.

Allowing the Rattlesnake Hills appellation will only help preserve a way of life that has developed here around the wineries, and also shows visitors that American small business is a big part of America's greatness.

Thanks for Listening.

Joel and Donna Tefft
Tefft Cellars Winery

Dear Sir / Madame;

My name is Paul H. Portteus. My wife, Marilyn, and I own Portteus Vineyards, established in 1981, and Portteus Winery, Inc, bonded in 1987. We are both high school graduates. Rattlesnake Ridge is a long standing brand of Portteus Winery, Inc.

We strongly support the establishment of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation.

Please consider the following comments;

1. Portteus Winery, Inc. currently bottles 75% of its wines under the "Rattlesnake Ridge" brand or as Portteus "Rattlesnake Red". Portteus Winery, Inc. registered "Rattlesnake Ridge" in the State of Washington in 1990 and received Dept. of Treasury Certificate of Label Approval also in 1990. We received Federal Trademark approval for Rattlesnake Ridge in 1991 and Rattlesnake (Red / Ridge) has been in continuous use for the past 15 years. Thusly labeled wines have been sold and distributed in the States of Washington, Oregon, California, Illinois, Virginia, Alberta Canada and Japan. Portteus Winery, Inc. claims exclusive ownership of the use of "Rattlesnake (Ridge/Red etc.)" for use on wine labels. We strongly protest any suggestions by others commenting under Notice No. 47 as to the use present or future of "Rattlesnake" on wine labels and ask that those comments be ignored.

2. Portteus Winery, Inc. has agreed to allow the use of "Rattlesnake (Hills)" for the purpose of identifying the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation only. In that Portteus Winery, Inc. has marketed "Rattlesnake" for 15 years and that "Rattlesnake" is so closely associated with Portteus Vineyards and Wines it is our opinion that the proposed boundaries of the "Rattlesnake Hills" application sufficiently protect that association.

3. The majority of vineyards and wineries of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation are clustered together 5 miles north of the town of Zillah which is on the Yakima River. The vineyards of the Rattlesnake Hills are up to 600 feet above the valley floor. We all actually lie "on" the Rattlesnake Hills rather than just near the Rattlesnake Hills. The next major cluster of vineyards and wineries are in and around the towns of Sunnyside and Prosser some 20 to 30 miles to the East.

4. Acreage in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation is highly prized by the tree fruit industry as well and has for the last 90 years been the most valuable acreage for agriculture in the Yakima Valley. Wines made from the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation are as uniquely different from those grown in the Sunnyside/ Prosser area as are the wines grown on Red Mountain. Red Mountain has gained its own approved appellation. Red Mountain is also within the Yakima valley.



5. In that 90% of grapes grown in the Yakima Valley are grown in the Sunnyside/Prosser area the reputation of the Yakima Valley is inextricably linked to

grapes/wines grown in that area. Red wines from grapes grown in that area tend to exhibit earthy, vegetal and herbal characteristics. These flavors are not typical of the Rattlesnake Hills vineyards or those of Red Mountain. Red wines made from the proposed Rattlesnake Hills appellation exhibit robust black fruit flavors with much softer tannins especially at lower sugar levels than Red Mountain. Red Mountain grown red wines typically show big fruit but they still have high tannins and acids even at high sugar levels of 24 to 25 brix. With the proliferation of vineyards in the Yakima Valley it is in the public interest to distinguish these distinctly different growing regions by approving the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural appellation. The reputation of the Yakima Valley wine industry is based on the Sunnyside/Prosser area which grows most of the grapes. We would like our small area to have a chance to be distinguished as a separated identifiable viticultural region.

Respectfully,

Paul and Marilyn Portteus

p.s. your website requires us to use a mail client which we don't have. This email was sent instead through AOL. The text box information is included below:

Name: Paul Portteus
Company: Portteus Winery, Inc.
Address1: 
Address2: 
City: Zillah
State: WA
Zip Code: 98953

July 25, 2005

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)
nprm@ttb.gov

Dear Sir/Madame:

The following comments are made with regards to Notice No. 47 for the proposed establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills viticultural area posted in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 104:

1. Rattlesnake Hills Name: The USGS maps for Yakima and Walla Walla (scale 1:250,000) clearly show that the Rattlesnake Hills is a range of mountains that extends from approximately 121:30 west longitude to 119:30 west longitude. This well beyond the east boundary (120:00 west longitude) for the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. In addition, historical and current local use for the name Rattlesnake Hills applies to a range of mountains that delineates the north boundary of the entire Yakima Valley, including to its extreme east end. The tallest peak in this range, locally referred to as Rattlesnake Mountain, is located to the east of the proposed east boundary line. Finally, when ATF published the Yakima Valley AVA (Federal Register: Vol. 48, No. 65) on April 4, 1983, it used the Rattlesnake Hills crest to delineate its northern boundary from Wapaot Dam in the west to Red Mountain in the east where the Yakima River runs north between the Rattlesnake Hills and Red Mountain (119:30) west longitude). For these reasons, the use of the Rattlesnake Hills name should not be permitted for the name of the proposed AVA because it is not consistent with published and local use of that geographical feature and is not unique to the proposed boundaries of the appellation.
2. Boundaries: The east boundary of the appellation (120 west longitude and Bonneville power lines) is artificial and unrelated to any unique geographic, climatic or soil characteristics. The geographic, climatic and soil characteristics are the same on both sides of the boundary and in fact continue east many miles to Red Mountain.
3. Climatic Differences:

- a. Heat Units: The proposed AVA cites heat unit differences between various neighboring WSU-PAWS weather stations inside and outside of the proposed AVA as justification for climatic uniqueness. In fact, the difference of 200 to 300 heat units between stations within the proposed AVA (2683 and 2870) and the cooler WSU stations in Prosser (2552 and 2554) and the warmer stations (Parker to the west and Badger Canyon to the east) are simply not significant or defining. Year to year fluctuation in heat units for individual stations can be 200-300 units as evidenced by comparing annual data for these stations in 1998 and 1999. These differences simply illustrate the effects of varying local topographies and agriculture, elevations and micro climates over the wide area covered by the PAWS network. In fact, the cited differences in heat units argue against their uniqueness because of the large amount of variation throughout the Yakima Valley and in the vicinity of the proposed appellation. Why is one of the warmest weather stations outside of the appellation only one mile away and the coolest station only two miles away?
 - b. Winter Cold: The claim that the proposed Rattlesnake AVA is protected from arctic air masses and cold temperature vine damage is simply not true. During the last two cold events (1996 and 2004), vineyards located inside the proposed AVA sustained as much damage as Yakima Valley vineyards located outside of the AVA. Cold damage in the Yakima Valley is primarily an elevation effect, with higher elevation sites consistently showing higher temperatures and lower damage regardless of the neighboring terrain. Damage is consistently higher below the 850 foot contour than above it. This is the reason why the vast majority of vineyards and fruit orchards in the entire Yakima Valley, along with with spring frost avoidance, are planted between the 850 and 1300 foot elevation contours.
4. Soil Types: The petition claims that the soils within the proposed AVA are unique to the AVA and 'seldom found elsewhere within the Yakima Valley area'. That is simply not true. The soil surveys for Benton and Yakima Counties clearly show that there is a band of common soils that run the length of the north side of the Yakima Valley from Union Gap to Red Mountain. The primary soil types between 500 and 2000 feet elevation are silt loams derived from wind deposited soils (loess), that are level to moderately steep, shallow to moderately deep, well drained with a mean annual temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and annual precipitation between six and 12 inches. These soils typically are underlain by a calcareous hardpan (caliche), which is in turn underlain by basalt. They include Warden Silt loam, which accounts for over 60% of the soils in the 500 to 2000 foot elevations, with lesser amounts of Shano, Burke, Esquatzel and Kiona silt loams. Again, there is absolutely nothing unique about the soils used for grape

growing within the proposed Rattlesnake hills AVA compared to the rest of the Yakima Valley.

5. Wine Labeling: As indicated in the proposal, there is only a little more than 1000 acres of wine grapes within the proposed boundaries and only about 17 wineries. However, the Yakima Valley AVA contains at least 10,000 acres of wine grapes, most of which are grown in the vicinity of the Rattlesnake Hills east of the proposed AVA boundaries and under the same geographic, climatic and soils conditions detailed in the Rattlesnake Hills proposal. In addition, there are another 30 wineries within the Yakima Valley and 280 wineries within Washington State, many of which utilize grapes from the Yakima Valley, but outside of the proposed appellation. By approving the Rattlesnake Hills appellation as proposed, TTB would be depriving us growers and wineries from using the Rattlesnake Hills designation for our grapes and on our wine labels.

For these reasons the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticultural Appellation do not meet the standards established by the ATF and should not be permitted. The name is too restrictive for the limited area of the appellation and the claimed distinctive geographic, climatic and soils characteristics cannot be supported by fact.

If the WHOLE Rattlesnake Ridge is not included, from west to east (river to river), the proposed AVA should be discarded.

Respectfully,

David K. Cowan
Grower and Winemaker
Cowan Vineyards

Grandview, WA 98930

name=Paul Lukas
name=Winemakers LLC
Address1=[REDACTED]
Address2=
City=Sunnyside
State=WA
Zip Code=98944

Comments=My company owns and operates two vineyards in the Yakima Valley AVA that total 344 acres. One of these vineyards is within the proposed boundary of the Rattlesnake Hills AVA and one is just to the east. I do not believe the petition establishes the proposed area as being significantly different from the surrounding Yakima Valley AVA and also believe the name is inappropriate for the relatively small geographic area it encompasses. The petition compares the areas heat units with those of Red Mountain. Red Mountain is already established as an AVA and has proved it is different by definition. The data in the petition points more too how similar the heat units are to other stations in the Yakima Valley AVA rather than how they are different. Further, I believe the statement that the proposed area is protected from the Canadian-Polar air is flawed. Our vineyard (within the proposed AVA) suffered major freeze damage during the last two freeze events recording temperatures to -16 below zero. Our vines were killed and needed to be replanted. The Rattlesnake Hills are a range of hills and mountains that run east by southeast from Union Gap all the way to Benton City (about 45 miles as the crow flies). The proposed AVA includes less than half of this area- mainly the western portion. Conversely, there are several times more vineyard acres in the middle and eastern portion of the Rattlesnake Hills region. I do not think the petition adequately establishes why the name Rattlesnake Hills should only apply to this small portion of the actual recognized mountain range. Our larger vineyard is to the east of the proposed AVA and historically we have experienced annual differences in growing conditions; however, we do not employ different viticulture practices between the two farms. Our experience shows that there are certainly unique micro climates within the Rattlesnake Hills as a whole, but certainly not geographically and climatically enough to establish an AVA within its own slopes. I believe the petition does not adequately meet the standards required to establish this area as a separate and distinct viticultural appellation.

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco and Trade Bureau
Attention: Notice No.47, Federal Register/Volume 70, No.104
P.O.#14412
Washington DC 20044-4412
(202)-927-8525 (fax)

Dear Sir/Madame,

I strongly support the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. I have lived and worked in the proposed AVA over the last 7 years. I have seen the noticeable climatic differences when travelling from within the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA to vineyards that lie outside the aforementioned AVA boundaries. I submit the following comments:

1.) The proposed boundaries are distinctive, meaningful, and discernible to anyone who has actually traversed the proposed area.

2.) The climate in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA has been

shown on a 10 year average to have 200-300 more Degree-days units than the surrounding areas. That increase can make ALL the difference during the harvest.

3.) In conclusion, it is my opinion that this petition is of measurable benefit to consumers, Winegrowers, and vintners throughout the entire Northwest. Several wineries in the area use Rattlesnake Hills grapes exclusively in wine production and have received notable acclaim in national and regional competitions. Northwest Wine Magazines have acknowledged the unique qualities of the wines produced from grapes grown in the proposed AVA.

Sincerely,

Greg Chappell
Hands On Northwest Consulting

██████████
Zillah, Wa 98953

gregory chappel
████████████████████

Comments on:

27CFR Part 9

(Notice Number 47)
RIN 1513-AA77

Proposed Establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills Viticulture Area (2004R-678P)

Comments by:

Edwin B. Stear
JoAnn Stear

[REDACTED]
Granger WA 98932

[REDACTED]
e-mail: [REDACTED]

We most strongly endorse approval of this proposed new viticulture area.

Also, we believe that the name Rattlesnake Hills is the most appropriate name among alternatives that have been discussed.

We are the owners and operators of Eaton Hill Winery and Vineyards at the above address. Our property and winery are adjacent to the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticulture Area and therefore we are technically outside of it. However, if it is approved, it is our intention to file the appropriate papers to include our property in the proposed new viticulture area.

We purchased our land and property in 1983 with the explicit intention of starting a winery and vineyard. We selected our location because it is on a rise in the valley immediately south of the Sunnyside Canal and has an excellent reputation for producing high quality fruit early in the season. We projected that the same would be true of grapes after reviewing studies on good viticulture area characteristics. Early indications from our vineyards, just coming into production, validate that projection.

We have been operating our winery for 17 years using purchased grapes from many parts of the Yakima Valley, and, in two cases, the Columbia Valley. In the process, we have purchased grapes from many different vineyards throughout the valley. Based on that experience and the subsequent relative retail success of our various wines, we can unequivocally state that grapes we purchased which were grown in the proposed new viticulture area are consistently superior in quality to those we purchased from vineyards elsewhere in Yakima Valley, and also in the Columbia Valley. We believe this is due to superior soils, drainage and climatic conditions that are unique to the proposed new viticulture area as described in the proposal. Moreover, we believe those conditions extend locally to our

property because of the adjacency to the proposed new viticulture area. This is why we think that our petition to join the proposed new viticulture area, if it is approved, should be a strong one.

Finally, direct observations during our extensive travels through most of the Yakima Valley support the claims made in the proposal as to viticulturally important differences between the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Viticulture Area and the rest of the Yakima Valley. We also note that the proposed area is geographically separated by tens of miles from the other newly established established and proposed viticulture areas in the state. This is apparently due to the uniqueness of viticulture characteristics of those areas from the rest of the Yakima Valley as is claimed in this proposal.

Nancy & John Hultquist writing in support of the Rattlesnake Hills AVA:
(sending this via email)

July 31, 2005

TO:

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47, Federal Register/ Vol. 70, No.104
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412

Bottom Line: The Rattlesnake Hills AVA is a good geographic idea.

We have both read the comments opposed to the RH proposal and agree we do not know enough to comment on some of the specifics. For instance, regarding winter cold damage we've only looked at several of the vineyards in the area and talked to several of the growers so our observations are neither wide ranging nor backed by rigorous data. However, we have not seen nor heard of killed vines or severely damaged vineyards in the RH area so the claim that there is and that the area thus does not differ from other areas sets us to wondering! This seems to be an admission of cold problems elsewhere and a statement that the proposed AVA has like problems. This doesn't fit with our limited knowledge.

Questioning the use of a road or a power line for a boundary seems a bit of a quibble. Such things are easily found on a map and just the sort of thing those reviewing the proposal need and, in fact, request. The USGS topographic maps do not show climatic boundaries, soil type boundaries, cold damage, or any of the things such as these that we would like to know. Things that are on the map must be used and if a road or power line is chosen so that there is no harm to the concept of the AVA then there is no problem.

Many of the other statements of opposition seem to be missing the mark. The issues, one might think, are two:

- 1: Can the proposed AVA lay claim to the name Rattlesnake Hills?, and
- 2: Is the defined entity recognizable as such?

ONE: The Name

We don't know when they first used the term but we've been buying "Rattlesnake Red" from Portteus Vineyards for years and while the word "Hills" hasn't been on the label we have never assumed Paul Portteus was naming this wine as such

because of the many snakes among his red vines. John was told by Paul that he was in favor of the AVA proposal.

Has any other winery in the Valley ever used “rattlesnake” or “rattlesnake hills” ?

With limited knowledge, again, we don’t recall any such usage. While the Rattlesnake name is used on topographic maps to the east of the proposed AVA, there are no vineyards in this area and no wineries. Moving south from the ridge crest, both vineyards and wineries begin on Sagebrush Ridge – a mapped feature just to the north of Snipes Road closer to Prosser than to the higher ridge to the north.

A major winery in the Valley uses the name “Washington Hills” – this seems to be a political and marketing choice because there is no topographic feature called Washington Hills, the winery is in the city, has no vineyards within sight, and uses the Columbia Valley AVA on its wines (we don’t know if they use the Yakima AVA or not). Around Prosser there are diverse and confusing geographical names (Willow Crest, Snoqualmie, and the aptly named Yakima River Winery; one suggesting Spain –Don Quixote; and one France –Chateau Champoux). Also, in the Prosser area seven or more of the wineries are located in the town and four of those in an industrial park (Kestrel, Thurston Wolfe, CR Sandidge, and Hogue). The point to be made is that this area does not seem to have a geographical identity nor to be closely integrated into the notion of place-specific wines (the French terroir, if you like). This is not a comment on the quality of the wines but a lack of the feeling for a sense-of-place that one gets when visiting the wineries in the proposed RHAVA.

TWO: Recognizable entity?

Here is an analogy. Looking out the window I see two horses. By just about any observable trait they look similar. I know that one requires a shoe that’s a tiny bit larger than the other, the other’s tail is longer, and so on. I can weigh them, take their pulse, count the respiration rate. A list of these items won’t tell me much although it might if one was a Clydesdale and the other a Shetland but that isn’t the case. In fact, one of those horses is a Tennessee Walking Horse and one is a Quarter Horse. How can I best explain what the difference is to someone not familiar with either breed? A ride of a hundred feet is more than enough. Time wise—take a minute.

The comments of those opposed to the RHAVA seem as though they think a list of things where the entities are not so different (in their view) should prove there is no difference. My suggestion is to spend one hour driving from one winery to another in the two places the opponents say are similar. It is easy to see they are not.

Whether or not the wines are different we can’t say. We are geographers, not wine judges. We’ll pass on sensory evaluation.

Bottom Line: The Rattlesnake Hills AVA is a good geographic idea.

Nancy & John Hultquist
Ellensburg, WA 98926
email: [REDACTED]

name=Gail and Shirley Puryear
name=Bonair Winery, Inc.
Address1=[REDACTED]
Address2=
City=Zillah
State=WA
Zip Code=98953
Comments=8/1/05

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47, Federal Register/ Vol. 70, No.104
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)

Dear Sirs,

This letter is in response to negative comments regarding the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. It offers insight into items that were not included in the original petition that help clarify issues.

In 1982 some people in Prosser, Benton County, WA decided to draw a line around a landform, the Yakima Valley, and call it an AVA. At that time they considered the area around Zillah, Yakima County, WA (35 miles northwest) too cold for growing wine grapes, but they included it anyway because it was part of the landform. We now know that an estimated 95% of that landform (the Yakima Valley) is not suitable for growing wine grapes. We also know that the area north of Zillah in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA is about 200 degree-days warmer than Prosser. The proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA is home to a growing number of artisan estate wineries. There are no 1,000 acre plots of commodity grapes destined for generic wines grown in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA.

AVA's are no longer identified landforms turned AVA. They are specific regions based on climate, soils, and geography. After the area is so identified, the most appropriate name currently and/or historically by which the area is known is applied to the region. The proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA was not named while the boundaries were being drawn. It was only after the boundaries were determined by soil, climate, and geography that the name Rattlesnake Hills was chosen. Names like Parker heights, Buena Heights, Zillah Peak, and Eagle Peak were rejected because they only represented parts of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. The only name presently and historically applied to the whole region was the Rattlesnake Hills. The words Rattlesnake Hills appears on seven of the eight maps submitted with the petition. The eighth map (USGS Topographic Map: Granger

Quadrangle, Washington 7.5 Minute series (Topographic) SW/4 Granger 15' Quadrangle 1:24,000 scale, 20-foot contours. 1965 N4615—W1207.5/7.5) contains about 2 acres on the southern edge of the proposed AVA.

I am quite aware that the Rattlesnake Hills is a much larger landform. The whole landform is described in our complete petition. The entire landform makes a very poor AVA, just like the Yakima Valley is not a very good AVA. If one divides the Rattlesnake Hills along the summit into a north and south side and at the Yakima/Benton County line into an east end and west end, one will quickly realize that three fourths of the landform is unsuitable for growing wine grapes. Specifically, the northwest segment lies in the Moxee and Black Rock Valleys. This area is unsuitable for wine grape production due to the cold climate, north slope, and lack of water. The northeast quadrant is on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. There is no agriculture there, just nuclear waste and radioactive tumbleweeds. The southeast quadrant in Benton County is dry-land agriculture only. There are only wheat fields and rangelands in this segment. The southwest quadrant in Yakima County is the only one suitable for wine grape production.

In the southwest quadrant everything below 850 feet elevation is unsuitable, so it was eliminated from the proposed AVA. East of the power line, is a large basin unsuitable for wine grapes even at 1200 feet elevation. This basin is formed by Washout Canyon, Sulfur Creek, and Black Canyon and is surrounded by peaks over 3000 feet high. Approximately six miles east of the power line, starting around SR 241 there is some high ground with wine grapes planted. This area is known as Black Canyon. It was originally considered as part of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. When the Vineyard del Sol (elevation 1300 feet) froze to the ground in May of 2004, this area was eliminated from the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. There was no frost damage within the boundaries of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA that same May night, even at 900 feet elevation with no frost protection. Although part of the Rattlesnake Hills landform, it was clearly different from the area in the proposed AVA. This should also quell the myth that one must go higher up the ridge to avoid cold air.

Cold air is a function of two factors: the height of the mountain above and the width of the valley below. The 120th meridian was chosen as the eastern boundary because it is at that point the Rattlesnake Hills climb to 3,000 feet elevation. West of the 120th meridian, the Rattlesnake Hills average about 2,000 feet. East of the 120th meridian, the Rattlesnake Hills rise to an average 3,000 feet or more. Mountains this high can generate a lot of cold air which travels down slope from the summit.

The 120th meridian also marks the narrowing of the Central Yakima Valley. West of the 120th meridian the valley is as much as 12 miles wide. East of the 120th meridian, the valley is restricted to a few miles by Snipes Mountain and Sagebrush Ridge. The Horse Heaven Hills restricts the Lower Yakima Valley near Prosser in the same way. Cold air accumulates in narrow valleys as opposed to dispersing in broad valleys. The boundaries of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA are far from arbitrary. The

mountains above are lower and the valley below is broader. This means less cold air. The boundaries are scientifically drawn.

The proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA has a two-mile no-grape zone around it. Only four acres of vines lie within two miles of any boundary. This ensures the integrity and accuracy of the boundaries.

The opposition to the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA is coming from the area around Prosser and specifically from some board members of Wine Yakima Valley. The Yakima Valley is synonymous with Prosser. For some reason they do not want an AVA established 35 miles away near Zillah. I don't understand why they are opposing it. The area north of Prosser where the '10,000 acres of wine grapes' is grown is properly called Sagebrush Ridge. (USGS Topographic Map. Sagebrush Ridge, Washington 7.5 minute series (topographic) SE/4 Grandview 15' quadrangle 1:24,000, 20' contours. 1979 46119-C7-TF-0024). There is no reference to the Rattlesnake Hills on this map. The use of older 1:125,000 series maps is inappropriate for use in identifying or refuting AVA's. The Washington Atlas and Gazetteer (DeLorme, Fifth Edition, 2001, Yarmouth, Maine 04096) places the summit of Sagebrush Ridge approximately nine air miles south of the crest of the Rattlesnake Hills. Sagebrush Ridge is part of a syncline that includes Toppenish Ridge, Snipes Mountain and Grandview Butte. It runs parallel to and south of the Rattlesnake Hills. This series of ridges separates the Toppenish Creek/Yakima Valley (The Central Yakima Valley) from the Satus Creek/Yakima Valley (the Lower Yakima Valley). Zillah is in the Central Yakima Valley and Prosser is in the Lower Yakima Valley. The vineyards on Sagebrush Ridge have no claim to the name Rattlesnake Hills, although growers often mistakenly use it. Unless a grower gives the range and township of the vineyards in question one cannot be sure whether it is on Sagebrush Ridge or in the Rattlesnake Hills. To be in the Rattlesnake Hills landform, the vineyard would have to be in T 10 N, T 11 N, or T 12 N. Vineyards located in T 9 N and T 8 N would be on Sagebrush Ridge. Since commenters purporting to grow grapes in the 'Rattlesnake Hills' did not specify the location of their vineyards, it would be impossible to know whether they were truly in the Rattlesnake Hills or on Sagebrush Ridge. I do know for a fact that the '10,000 acres' are on Sagebrush Ridge, not in the Rattlesnake Hills.

Zillah and Prosser are about as separated as Sonoma, CA (Sonoma Valley AVA) and St. Helena CA (Napa Valley, AVA). Sonoma and St. Helena both have redwood trees. Zillah and Prosser both have sagebrush. Does this make them the same? The fact that there are 10,000 acres of wine grapes on Sagebrush Ridge and only 1215 in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA should be a clue as to how different the areas are. The proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA is actually larger than the Sagebrush Ridge growing region.

There are also wine grapes planted south and east of the city of Prosser in the Horse Heaven Hills. Did anyone notice that the Horse Heaven Hills AVA does not include the north slope of the Horse Heaven Hills? These vineyards, although in the Horse Heaven Hills landform, were not included in the AVA. (I assume for valid reasons). If you ask

people in Yakima, WA if they live in the Yakima Valley, they will respond 'yes,' but the city of Yakima lies outside the boundaries of the Yakima Valley AVA. Just because someone plants a vineyard in a landform, does not make all AVA boundaries extend to that vineyard.

Two hundred degree-days over a ten-year average shows a real difference in climate. It is particularly important in a cool year when the grapes don't ripen on Sagebrush Ridge as was the case in 1999. Bonair Winery grows grapes in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA and contracts grapes from Sagebrush Ridge (Prosser Flats.) In 1999 I finished harvest in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA and waited for grapes to ripen on Sagebrush Ridge. On October 22, I decided to pick grapes from Sagebrush Ridge even though they were not as ripe as desired because they had lost their leaves and were just desiccating on the vine. Typically, I harvest grapes in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA two weeks earlier than the ones from Sagebrush Ridge. This is sound empirical data that the two areas are different.

I contract Chardonnay from a vineyard on Sagebrush Ridge. In 1996 and 2004 this vineyard froze to the ground. In 2004, I was able to harvest a full crop from our home Chardonnay vineyard at 900 feet elevation in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. I also was able to get replacement Chardonnay from the Roza Hills Vineyard in the Proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. Our Morrison Vineyard (1200 feet), planted in 1968 has never frozen to the ground. It produced crops in 1996 and 2004. As one goes west in the Yakima Valley AVA, average winter temperatures decrease (cold hardiness is maintained), but extreme winter temperatures moderate (less damage). This is a really good combination in Washington State. Again, this is anecdotal evidence of the differences between Sagebrush Ridge and the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA.

It is because of this inconsistent supply from Sagebrush Ridge that we are shifting all of our grape supply to the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. The climate on Sagebrush Ridge is empirically different than that in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA.

This region shall forever be known as the Rattlesnake Hills. The cities of Granger, Zillah, Toppenish, and Wapato, the Yakama Nation, Legends Casino, and other organizations have joined forces to form the Rattlesnake Hills Tourist Trail. With \$100,000 in hotel/motel taxes as a start, they are applying for \$800,000 in grants to promote the region using the Rattlesnake Hills Wine Trail logo.

There have been comments and opinions opposed to the establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills AVA, but no new scientific or experiential evidence has been presented that would refute the original petition. I grow grapes in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA and buy grapes from Prosser. I have twenty-years' experience with both. They are not the same. I encourage the TTB to grant AVA status to the Rattlesnake Hills as soon as possible.

Gail and Shirley Puryear

Bonair Winery, Inc.



Zillah, WA 09053

name=Willard H. Mechem IV
name=BHM Vintners
Address1=410 S Bonair Rd
Address2=
City=Zillah
State=WA
Zip Code=98953

Comments=To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a comment on the proposed "Rattlesnake Hills" AVA. Washington state wine is a young and growing industry. As we move into bigger markets and compete for shelf space, we as a whole (Washington wine industry) have to find new ways to make ourselves stand out in the crowd. The proposed "Rattlesnake Hills" AVA is not only one that produces award winning wines, but will also give Washington wine industry another edge on the market as a whole.

I support any and all new growth in this state's wine industry, especially the "Rattlesnake Hills" AVA, because it is consistently year after year one of the best growing regions in the state. It can only get better!

Thank you,
Willard H. Mechem IV
BHM Vintners
winemaker@bhmvintrners.com

name=Paul Vandenberg
name=Paradisos del Sol Winery
Address1=3230 Highland Dr
Address2=
City=Zillah
State=WA
Zip Code=98953
Comments=Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)
nprm@ttb.gov

RE: TTB Notice No. 47- Proposed Establishment of the Rattlesnake Hills
Viticultural Area. (6/01/05)

My name is Paul Vandenberg and I am a professional winegrower of 23 years experience in the vineyards of Walla Walla, Benton, Yakima, and Grant counties. I have worked for over 15 wineries, all but one using Yakima Valley grapes.

I have observed consistent patterns of vineyard growth and characteristics of fruit within the Yakima Valley Appellation.

When the appellation was first created over two decades ago, we knew much less about viticulture than today. The Yakima Valley Appellation included much land that has been found unsuitable for vineyards.

It is my opinion that there are more than 8 areas worthy of being sub appellations of the Yakima AVA. I believe the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA is a distinctive area within the Yakima Valley AVA and should be an AVA.

When the Rattlesnake Hills AVA was first being discussed, I was asked for my views as a part owner of a vineyard in the areas under discussion, Vineyard del Sol, one-half mile west of the Yakima-Benton County line, just above the Roza Canal. I argued against the valley that is bisected by Highway 24 being part of the proposed AVA.

When riding a motorcycle at night, I could readily perceive a distinct chill that encompassed what I refer to as The Sulphur Creek Valley, the drainages of Washout, Sulphur Creek, and Black Canyon.

My observation was that the contour that the "power line" followed was roughly analogous to the temperature change. Elevation contours didn't match the temperature change I observed. There are few, if any, stone fruit orchards east of the power line.

The flow of cool air doesn't follow elevation contour lines but fills basins and canyons to some depth as it flows downhill.

Vineyard del Sol and its vicinity are distinctively cooler than the vineyards I frequent in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. Vineyard del Sol ripens 2-3 weeks later than the vineyards in the proposed AVA, and has never achieved 24 Brix in our Cabernet Sauvignon before the end of the growing season.

There is a need for frost protection almost every May. In May 2003, Vineyard del Sol was severely damaged by temperatures of 24 degrees Fahrenheit where most sites in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA were 29 degrees Fahrenheit of warmer with little damage.

East of the Sulphur Creek Valley there are vast acreages, such as Oasis Farms, Crawford Vineyards, Kestrel Vineyards, on the south slope of Sagebrush Ridge, which is a geologic uplift some miles south of Rattlesnake Ridge. This area has major differences from the West and East ends of the Yakima Valley.

Sagebrush Ridge is often cooler, appears to receive more precipitation, and has distinctive wines.

Soils:

Our farm, Paradisos del Sol in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA, has a (water deposit) lacustrine silt loam soil containing ice borne rock from the Missoula floods.

Paradisos del Sol is lacustrine soils to depths of over 10 feet despite being on an eroded ridge top. We find bits of granite when we dig shallow holes. We find granite in our neighborhood in the top twelve inches of undisturbed soils.

There is an elevation-related phenomena - one reason to view the Roza Canal contour as a boundary for future AVA divisions. There are few flood deposits above the canals general elevation.

At Portteus Vineyards, above the Roza Canal in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA, we have a loess soil over the Ellensburg formation, cobbles over 20-50 foot of sand with basalt under. Only the top foot or two resembles

Vineyard del Sol soil.

Windy Point Vineyards has similar loess soils over water borne cobble.

Windy Point Vineyards in the Parker Heights area may be the earliest bud push and harvest location in the Yakima Valley AVA. Parker Heights has long been known as a warm area. Peaches, apricots, and nectarines are found in this area in greater concentration than even the rest of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills.

The soils at Vineyard del Sol are shallow loess over fractured basalt.

Arbitrary lines:

The Yakima Valley AVA draws a line from the summit of Badger Mountain due south. No regard is made to soil, geography, climate, drainages, air flow, government boundaries, or elevation. The applicants just agreed to draw a line there.

As a result, Badger Mountain Vineyard is not in the Yakima Valley AVA, just in the Yakima Valley. Sites on the same hillside and elevation that are a mile away are in the Yakima Valley AVA.

Rattlesnake Ridge, Red Mountain, Candy Mountain, and Badger Mountain are all the same geologic uplift.

Toppenish Ridge, Snipes Mountain, and Sagebrush Ridge are distinct, related features. To get to Rattlesnake Ridge from any vineyard on Sagebrush Ridge, you have to go down (through the valley) and then up.

Because there is no irrigated farmland on the actual Rattlesnake Ridge uplift east of the Benton County line, it is unlikely that there would be vineyards.

Sincerely,

Paul Vandenberg
Winegrower
Paradisos del Sol Winery & Vineyard
3230 Highland Dr
Zillah, WA 98953
509.829.9000
paul@paradisosdelsol.com

7/31/05

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47, Federal Register/ Vol. 70, No.104
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412
202-927-8525 (fax)

Dear Sirs:

I am a fairly new (two year) wine grape grower and am in the process of applying for a winery license in the Rattlesnake Hills Appellation (proposed). I have grown cherries and apples since 1991 in the same place I am now growing wine grapes. Although frost is a danger for tree fruit crops in any area in the Yakima Valley I have anecdotal evidence that my area, which is inside the proposed Rattlesnake Hills Appellation, has faired better than almost all other areas in the entire Valley in general, and in particular during the Halloween frost of 2003 and the January 2004 killer freeze. My first year vines survived at a 92% rate and are thriving as we speak. Based on discussions with other growers up and down our valley I feel strongly that the proposed appellation area is unique in its suitability for superior wine grape quality due to its frost free format, rocky southern slope (at least in my immediate area), intense heat units and generally pest free environment. I highly recommend the granting of this appellation for the above reasons.

Terrence R. Harrison

[REDACTED]
Sunnyside, WA 98944

name=Thomas Campbell

name=Tanjuli

Address1=

Address2=

City=Zillah

State=WA

Zip Code=98953

Comments=

Dear Sir/Madame:

I support approval of the Rattlesnake Hills AVA. I am a 24 year veteran of the Washington wine industry. I am a UC Davis trained enologist and viticulturalist and came to the Yakima Valley after making wines and planting vineyards in the Sonoma Valley, Edna Valley and Temecula California. I have built and sold wineries in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA and currently own Tanjuli Winery in Zillah, WA. I have planted and sold vineyards in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA and currently own orchard land northwest of Zillah, WA that I plan on converting into vineyard.

1. Use of the name Rattlesnake Hills is appropriate for the proposed AVA. The local folks refer to the western end of ridge of hills as the Rattlesnake Hills and the region at the east end as "Rattlesnake Mountain" referring the dominant land mark and monolithic slope leading to the high point of the same name. I feel the most appropriate name must be used "Rattlesnake Hills".

2. East boundary of the proposed viticultural area: The TTB encourages the use of landmarks, especially roads. The Red Mountain AVA uses power lines. The large power lines that serve as the proposed eastern boundary make an equally if not better demarcation.

3. Climatic differences: It has been my observation that in the severest winters cold northern arctic air breaches the Sunnyside gap in the ridge at the eastern boundary filling the lower elevations from Sunnyside, Grandview to Prosser first before moving west up the Yakima River. This has resulted in my being able to get grapes in those cold years from the variegated west end of the valley and the destruction and damage of grapevines I had contracted for from the lower portion of the monolithic slope of the east end of the valley. The cold arctic systems are generally contained by the Rocky Mountains flowing down the central plains of

North America. The occasional arctic system that breaches the Rockies therefore usually comes from the north east making any moderating pressure from the Pacific to the west all that more critical in preventing freeze damage.

Respectfully,

Thomas Campbell

Tanjuli Winery
4530 East Zillah Drive
Zillah, WA 98953
406 270-5448
406 883-0803 fax

tanjuli@gmail.com

name=Mark Braungardt

name=

Address1=

Address2=

City=Seattle

State=WA

Zip Code=98119

Comments=I'm a consumer from Seattle and I have noticed a difference with the quality of the wine from the Rattlesnake Hills area and other parts of Washington. I support this initiative because I like good wine that get in the Rattlesnake Hills area.

name=Gail Puryear
name=Bonair Winery, Inc.
Address1=500 S Bonair Rd
Address2=
City=Zillah
State=WA
Zip Code=98953
Comments=Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412

In regard to comment 15:

The petition to establish the Rattlesnake Hills AVA did not claim it does not get cold in the proposed area. The petition claimed that it was always relatively warmer than areas east of the proposed boundaries. The 1996 Canadian Polar event was very strong and accompanied by high winds as the Jet Stream lowered to ground level. This made the distinctions less dramatic than in 2004 which was a relatively weak event. Winter damage was evident all over Eastern Washington in 1996.

The vineyard discussed in Comment 15 is the Whiskey Canyon Vineyard. It is situated in a deep canyon below a large basin. Cold air from the basin drains into Whiskey Canyon. A temperature of -16 o F. is not surprising for this location in 1996. The fact that the vineyard is still there after 25 years speaks to the climate of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. Whiskey Canyon is a terrible location, but the vineyard seems to thrive there.

The petition reported an official temperature of -15.5 o F. in 1996 at the Buena Station within the boundaries of the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. -16 o F. in Whiskey Canyon would be consistent with that temperature. It was -17.7 o F. in Benton City and -20.2 o F. at College Station in the Walla Walla Valley AVA. As we pointed out in the petition, when temperatures are this cold, 2 degrees can make all the difference between vine survival, and loss of top of the vines, and total death of the vines.

This data is consistent with and supports our claim that extreme temperatures are more moderate in the western part of the Yakima Valley AVA.

The larger portion of Winemakers LLC's vineyards is in the Black Canyon area of the Rattlesnake Hills. Mr. Lukas makes the observation that, "historically we have experienced annual differences in growing conditions;" at that vineyard. This observation supports the decision to exclude the Black Canyon area in the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA.

I believe the petition merits approval as submitted.

Gail Puryear
Bonair Winery, Inc.
Zillah, WA 98953

HYATT VINEYARDS

2212 Queen Anne Avenue North, Seattle WA 98109 (206) 284-1951 vintsel@seanet.com

July 27, 2005

Comment 26

Dear Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms:

I'd like to comment on the proposed Rattlesnake Hills A.V.A. in the Northern Yakima Valley of Washington State. I've been involved with the Washington wine business since 1982, have served twice in 1986 and 1987 as President of the trade association Washington Wine Institute, and as Treasurer in 1988 and 1989 of the Washington Wine Commission, which I was instrumental in forming.

I'm also the National Sales Manager for Hyatt Vineyards - which is within the proposed appellation - for the last six years. I am a firm believer in the promise of the entire extraordinary growing area in this State on own-rooted stocks that already are showing potential to rival some of the finest regions on Earth.

In the formative years of this barely thirty-year-old industry, we were saddled at the outset with the horribly imprecise Columbia Valley appellation that covers far too large an area to be useful for trade and consumers. The addition of smaller appellations over the past two decades are only the 'baby steps' of a significant region starting to define itself. It is for that reason that I support the vision of those who seek the Rattlesnake Hills appellation.

I'll leave it to the technicians to quibble over scientific details since I am not qualified; I am qualified to and have represented the Washington wine industry in selling and promote our State's wines nationally for more than twenty years.

The current Yakima Valley appellation is too large, over 65 miles long, and confusing to trade, press and consumers seeking more reliably defined areas to trust for their purchases. Of course this is about money: smaller, more highly-regarded appellations eventually allow the members to charge a premium for their produce if their wines have merit.

Politics is of course an issue. The North and South Yakima Valley is divided by more than geography, heat units, microclimates and consistency of appellation: it is divided by older wineries in the south that do not want competition from a smaller group of younger wineries in the north Valley forming their own appellation. This is also of economic importance to those objecting from that area.

What I believe is lacking in the objectors is vision and a belief in the future. These paramount concerns for a developing region are taking a back seat to temporal, personal, and petulant agendas, and are not benefiting the public, the wineries and this State.

The spectacular cohesion and cooperation of the nascent Rattlesnake Hills member wineries over the last year and a half has been impressive and forward-looking. This degree of responsible, defined setting aside of petty personal concerns for the good of the region is remarkable in an industry where any two winemakers and/or

winery owners will have at least three opinions on any subject. Please give us a chance to market our products more accurately, efficiently and profitably.

David Adair
National Sales Manager/Hyatt Vineyards
2020 Gilbert Road
Zillah WA 98953

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 03, 2005 9:49 PM
To: Rulemaking, TTB
Subject: 'TTB Notice No. 47'

TTB

To whom it may concern:

My name is Charles Fiola. I have been growing wine grapes in Yakima since 1986. Prior to that I worked with wine grapes in the Clare Valley of Australia and helped plant some of the first vineyards on the western slope of Colorado. As I write this I am looking out at the features that define so well the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. Elephant Mountain rises, dry, yellow and brown, 1800 feet above me to the northwest and the Rattlesnake Ridge extends from there to the southeast. At the base of the hills there is the Rosa Canal and the beginning of orchards and my vineyard. To the south I look down on into the lush green Yakima River Valley and see more orchards up to the Yakima Valley Highway (Sunnyside Canal) where the crops change to hops and corn. The slopes of the Rattlesnake Hills are distinctly different growing areas from the Yakima River Valley.

When I first moved here, a viticulturist at St. Michelle told me that you could not grow wine grapes North of the town of Zillah, because the conditions were so different from those around Grandview and Prosser. He was right about one thing, the conditions are different. Last year (2004) there was extensive cold damage to vines in the Prosser, Tricities area and Walla Walla. I had no damage here. In 1996 there was still a crop, considering temperatures were at -26F in many areas, killing vines to the ground, I experienced mostly bud damage.

Several wineries use my vineyard designation on their labels, which distinguishes the source from the Yakima Valley. There are marked differences between the grapes purchased from the lower valley and the proposed AVA. These wines are noticeable more fruit forward and consistently come in earlier with a low pH and high sugars. One vintner refers to these as acid bombs (at 26 brix).

I support the AVA as proposed.

Charles Fiola

name=Gail R. Puryear
name=Bonair Winery, Inc.
Address1=500 S Bonair Rd
Address2=
City=Zillah
State=WA
Zip Code=98953
Comments=August 4, 2005

Chief, Regulation and Procedures Division
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 47
P.O. Box 14412
Washington DC, 20044-4412

This response is to comment 8 and all others that follow the same common outline:

In regard to “2) The climate, geology, soils and general growing conditions within the proposed AVA are not significantly different from surrounding areas.”

I have a master's degree from California State University at Los Angeles, but I am not a soils scientist. That is why Dr. Alan Busacca was contracted to do the soils section of the petition to establish the Rattlesnake Hills AVA. Dr. Busacca is a respected soils scientist and geologist who is familiar with the wine-growing regions of Eastern Washington. He has written the soils sections for other eastern Washington AVA petitions. Dr. Busacca and I spent a half day touring the proposed Rattlesnake Hills AVA. He seemed quite surprised at what he was shown off the main roads on private property.

Rather than second guess Dr. Busacca, I will defer all questions raised by the home-town experts to the original petition. I assume Dr. Busacca was accurate in the petition and it should be approved without modification.

As a point of logic, if all the soils are the same in the Yakima Valley AVA, why is Red Mountain a separate AVA? A second question arises. If power lines are an acceptable boundary marker for the Red Mountain AVA, why are they 'not meaningful' for the Rattlesnake Hills AVA?

Gail Puryear, Winemaker
Bonair Winery, Inc.
Zillah, WA 98953

