

CALIFORNIA GRAPE & TREE FRUIT LEAGUE

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October 27,2006

Mr. Geronimo Quinones
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Fresh Products Branch Standardization Section
1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 1661 South Building Stop 0240
Washington, DC 20250-0240

Federal Register: Volume 71, No. 184, Page 55367-69 Docket Number FV-06-304

Dear Mr. Quinones:

Established in 1911, the California Grape & Tree Fruit League (League) is a non-profit statewide industry trade association representing growers, packers, shippers, and exporters of table grapes and deciduous tree fruit. The League's members collectively account for about 85 percent of the total production of these commodities in California.

At the request of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, the League and its membership reviewed the U.S. Table Grape Grade Standards through an Ad Hoc Committee which included industry participants outside the scope of this organization.

The industry's original petition identified the need to request an amendment to the grade standards to include a fixed percentage of shatter (10%) within non-plain pack containers such as bags and clamshells. This amendment will only apply to inspections at receiving point, and will not create an additional allowance from point of shipment.

Following the conclusion of the earlier comment period ending March 27,2006, we believe the industry has clearly demonstrated the support for the petition filed by the California Grape & Tree Fruit League to amend the United State's Standards for Grades of Table Grapes (European or Vinifera Type). The League and the California Table Grape Commission continue to support the petitioned amendment in an effort to ensure the grade standards are more consistent with current packaging practices and increasing saleable consumer products.

The League appreciates the opportunity to participate in the revision of the table grape standards and the industry looks forward to the benefits from the implementation of amending the current standard. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (559) 226-6330.

Sincerely,

Barry Bedwell, President
California Grape & Tree Fruit League