**2016 ALPAC Agenda Inclusion Item From SMB**

**St. Margaret’s Bay would like to present a request for mobility before the ALPAC members. This mobility, when granted, would enable SMB tuna fishermen to capture and harvest Bluefin tuna by rod and reel method.**

**Backgrounder: The past several years has marked a time of significant change within the tuna fleets of Atlantic Canada. This change is normal but surprising, such as with the volume of licenses changing hands in the Sou’west Fleet. New Brunswick is undergoing a steady and meaningful change as it reconstructs its license holdings. Other fleets are examining their options, and necessarily so.**

**The St. Margaret’s Bay fleet lost one of its license holders in 2015 and had to accept the reality of licenses changing hands. As a result there was a significant flow of license ownership last year. Remarkable as this was, it also focused attention to other matters needing attention. The tuna impoundment program for which our fleet is unique, is severely threatened economically, due to the decline of the mackerel feed stock along the south coast of Nova Scotia, and which is so necessary to our fleet. Now almost exclusively, feed has to be purchased in the frozen form and at high cost and from distant locales. Another issue is the length of season available to the SMB fleet. We fish for tuna from mid-June until about mid-August, when the tuna move further along the coast, and/or to deeper water away from the trapnet opportunities we have to catch them. This means that while other fleets are preparing and indeed fishing to November’s end, we are idled.**

**In 2004, and for two additional seasons, SMB was permitted to fish by rod and reel under an experimental program. The fleet lacked the necessary skills to adequately perform a results based outcome. However, we have worked many years now with some of the best fishermen from around the Maritimes Region, and are now in need of this flexibility to stabilize our fleet. Our fleet is therefore submitting the following proposal:**

**St. Margaret’s Bay is requesting permission to fish for Bluefin tuna using rod and reel, harpoon, and tended line. All such fishing by the St. Margaret’s Bay fleet would be subject to quota availability, and would also be subject to the following:**

1. **The fishing area would be those waters currently recognized as being attached to St. Margaret’s Bay and within the fleet separation line, extending from Pennant Point to Cross Island.**
2. **The fishing activity would not have an ex-sector component.**

 **3) Under this format, each license holder would qualify for one permit.**

 **4) There would be no increase in effort, as any licensed tuna fisherman in St. Margaret’s Bay would have to suspend all his trapnet activity, in order to participate in this mobile effort.**

 **5) SMB participants would be bound to dockside monitoring and observer coverage, as are the other fleets.**