

Canadian Statement to the Pacific Fishery Management Council

March 8, 2020

Rohnert Park

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank the Pacific Fishery Management Council for once again considering the issue of the *Canada-United States Pacific Albacore Tuna Treaty* and accepting my statement. The Treaty is a long-standing agreement between our two countries and provides a concrete link on a resource of common interest and value. Canada continues to view the Treaty as a reflection of our positive bilateral relationship.

Canada was very pleased with the Treaty's resumption in 2013 and the two subsequent three-year regimes. We view the last six years as a time of increasingly positive relations on the water, and the bilateral fishing regime has been effective and beneficial to our respective fishing industries.

The Treaty provides our countries with a solid foundation for cooperation in the international organisations that are responsible for the management of North Pacific albacore tuna. Canada and the United States have worked together as leaders within these international organisations to help ensure sustainable albacore tuna fisheries throughout the North Pacific. Our two countries have many shared interests within these organizations and our strong relationship helps to see these interests advance. Most recently, our bilateral cooperation on the development of the Pacific albacore tuna Management Strategy Evaluation has been a shining example of the good working relationship that has been fostered through engaging one another under the Treaty.

The Treaty has been important for the Canadian North Pacific albacore tuna industry and Canada is firmly committed to seeking its renewal this year. The Canadian fishery supports hundreds of Canadian jobs, and provides benefits to many coastal communities along the west coast.

The benefits derived from the Treaty are mutual. Pacific albacore fishing in Canadian waters and access to Canadian ports provides economic value to the harvesters who fish and land there. The benefits that flow to the United States extend beyond fishing and port access to include the opportunities to build relationships with different buyers, access to different price points for the fish, and the ability to exchange foreign crews.

Although catch of Pacific albacore tuna has been higher in American waters in recent years, the impacts of changing ocean ecosystems is increasing variability in migration patterns. Canadian harvesters have observed more juveniles in Canadian waters this past fishing season and catch of Pacific albacore tuna are already harvested as far north as Canada's border with Alaska. We have 2019 logbook data that suggests that catch per unit effort is becoming comparable among

Canadian and American waters. Given the nature of the albacore fishery, being limited by lines on a map can cause significant challenges. The Treaty provides both of our countries' harvesters with the flexibility necessary to harvest this highly migratory species, allowing Canadian and American harvesters to adjust fishing plans and "follow the fish" throughout the fishing seasons.

It is Canada's sincere hope that we will be able to begin a fruitful negotiation process for a renewed regime in 2020 and that the PFMC will support this process. Thank you.