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Oliver Dowden CBE MP  
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London  
SW1A 2BQ

24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you as the CEO of the Angling Trust, the national governing body for angling in England and Wales. As the governing body we represent all disciplines of angling, as both a sport and an important leisure and cultural activity. We have thousands of individual members and hundreds of thousands of members of affiliated clubs. Angling is one of the UK's most popular pastimes and makes an important contribution to the UK economy, generating £4 billion annually and supporting 40,000 jobs. We represent more than 1,800 of the many angling clubs, fisheries and riparian owners throughout the UK, whose fishing rights are worth at least £1 billion.

As the governing body, we stand fully behind the advice the government has given. Fighting this virus, protecting the NHS and working to save lives is the overriding priority for the nation and all of us must play our part. We stand ready to help you and the government in whatever way we can.

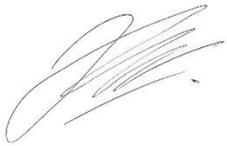
With the latest restrictions, we note the government advice is for people to stay at home. This is the message we are sending clearly to the angling community. However, in that same government advice, in relation to exercise it states, "**One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.**" We would welcome clarification as to whether this is restricted to a run, walk, or cycle, or if other forms of exercise are applicable? Subject to the advice that exercise should be taken close to a person's home and avoiding all unnecessary travel.

Angling is a solitary past time, it is an effective way of supporting people with a range of conditions, being accessible to those with physical disabilities and those who suffer from anxiety, depression and mental health issues. We work closely with the NHS and military veteran's organisations through a number of projects supporting these groups.

Should the government feel it is able to lift some of the restrictions in three weeks or deem this style of individual, self-distancing activity a beneficial solution in the current climate, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you on helping to encourage angling as one of the ways people can begin to leave their homes in a safe and appropriate way. In addition, when as a nation, we come through this crisis, as we will, we would be very keen to work with you, and bodies such as Sport England and the NHS, in helping to get our nations active once more, and as importantly, in helping people to take steps to improve their mental health, which will inevitably come under some stress in coming weeks and months.

Should you wish to discuss how we can help, we are standing by to have that conversation at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Cook', with a stylized, cursive style.

Jamie Cook  
CEO – Angling Trust.

CC: Nigel Huddleston MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage)