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Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.
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By Email

Dear Secretary of State

Angling during the second lockdown

Further our letter of [October 31st](#) pressing the case for socially distanced outdoor sports like angling be permitted during the forthcoming national lockdown, we are delighted that outdoor recreation at 'parks and gardens' and at 'beaches and in the 'countryside' is to be deemed a legitimate reason for leaving home from November 5th.

Socially distanced outdoor sports like angling, golf, cycling etc are not in any way part of the problem. In fact, they contribute to reducing pressure on parks, footpaths and other open spaces where people would otherwise gather if prohibited from pursuing their chosen pastimes.

We understand that angling was raised by colleagues at Saturday's Cabinet meeting and there was support for it remaining permitted as a safe and highly beneficial outdoor recreational activity.

We were pleased that fishing venues were not included on the list of sports facilities required to close as they provide a safe, manageable, outdoor resource to ensure angling participation across the country. We very much appreciate the government's recognition (in a recent Parliamentary answer) of angling as a naturally distanced, individual, outdoor activity with benefits to both the physical health and mental wellbeing of a wide range of participants.

With the current campaigns by the national governing bodies for golf, tennis and swimming for specific exemptions for their sporting facilities during the lockdown, we want to ensure that if this is forthcoming that angling is not overlooked or inadvertently restricted. We understand that the regulations are unlikely to be published until Wednesday and, as you can imagine, we are already fielding a considerable amount of enquiries from anglers on issues such as travel and competitive fishing and we need to offer them clear guidance.

On travel, we note that the updated travel guidance on November 1st refers to 'short journeys' for 'exercise'. It would be helpful if this was amended to say, 'exercise and outdoor recreation'.

Following the Prime Minister's Statement [on May 10th](#) you helpfully and specifically referenced angling as one of the first permissible outdoor activities to be resumed. This followed considerable representations from MPs of all parties in response to the thousands of anglers who wrote to them supporting the Angling Trust's "*When we fish again*" proposals for the safe return to fishing. We remain extremely confident that these plans and the measures we have put in place adhere to the aims and objectives of the Government as we enter this temporary lockdown period.

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All we request is that when publishing clarification on the sports who are lobbying to be included in the definition of permissible 'outdoor recreation' that angling is specifically acknowledged and that fisheries are permitted to offer access to fishing so that angling can continue to play its part, delivering a positive solution in support of the wider objectives that we all share.

I'm sending a copy of our correspondence to Phil Smith, Head of Sport at Sport England and Sir Charles Walker MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Angling.

Thank you for your assistance and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Cook
CEO - Angling Trust