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For immediate release:

Please contact for further comment: Tyler Ruhland (608)393-6702 wisconsin@hunternation.org, or Tom Kleiman (920)366-0752 contactaccurate@sbcglobal.net

Hunter Nation and Wisconsin Lakeshore Business Association File Brief in State Supreme Court to Protect Constitutional Right to Fish in Wisconsin *Outdoor Groups Say Evers' Order Infringes on Constitutionally Protected Rights While Causing Economic Hardship for thousands of Small Outdoor Businesses*

Madison...Two non-profit organizations that work to protect the rights of anglers and hunters in Wisconsin announced today that they are filing an Amicus Brief with the State Supreme Court on behalf of their members to protect the constitutionally protected right to fish that they say has been infringed upon by Governor Tony Evers' Emergency Order deeming thousands of businesses as non-essential.

Hunter Nation and the Wisconsin Lakeshore Business Association called the Governor's order that has shut off access to fishing for thousands of professional fishing guides, charter boat captains and their clients as "arbitrary and capricious and a clear violation of our constitutionally protected rights" in the brief they filed today.

Hunter Nation President and CEO, Luke Hilgemann said, "Fishing is a multi-billion-dollar industry that employs more than 30,000 folks in the Badger State. For the Governor and his administration to claim that fishing guides and charter boat captains are "non-essential" has put these small business owners at risk of losing everything and blocked their customers from partaking in our long held outdoor traditions."

"WLBA President Tom Kleiman of Kewaunee said, "We recognize the concern with the COVID-19 virus, however, we also recognize the concerns of hundreds of fishermen whose livelihoods are being destroyed by these emergency orders. But it's not just about these charter captains and guides. We are also concerned about the impacts on the many Wisconsin lakeshore communities that are dependent on the tourism fishing creates. We hope the court will recognize the hardship this order has put on these businesses and communities. We think there is great benefit to getting people outdoors to enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources, and we can do so in a safe manner that protects from the spread of disease."

Attorney Adam Jarchow, who volunteered to take the lead in writing the brief pro-bono for the groups had the following to say: "I have been touched by the stories of these small business owners. They have literally poured their hearts and souls into their businesses. To watch that evaporate, is heart wrenching. What makes is worse is its completely arbitrary and has nothing to do with the stopping the spread of Covid-19. Hopefully, our brief will put a face on the human catastrophe resulting from the Safer at Home Order."

Head of the Wisconsin chapter of Hunter Nation, Tyler Ruhland said, "Telling these fishermen that they can't operate their businesses for paying clients, but that they could take those same people out fishing for free does nothing to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. The confusion and bureaucratic run around these businesses have been given by the Governor and his staff in unacceptable."

The brief filed by the two groups included more than a dozen Wisconsin fishing guides, charter boat captains and their clients who have been impacted by the Governor's order. Wisconsin is home to nearly 2,000 licensed professional guides and Charter Boat Captains who make their living providing advice and guidance to hundreds of thousands of anglers every year.

Wisconsin voters passed a constitutional right to fish, hunt, trap and take game in 2003 by a margin of 82-18. Twenty other states have passed similar constitutional protections for outdoor pursuits as well. The Wisconsin constitution states:

“Right to fish, hunt, trap, and take game. SECTION 26: The people have the right to fish, hunt, trap, and take game subject only to reasonable restrictions as prescribed by law.”

Hunter Nation is a member driven non-profit that fights to preserve God, Family, Country and the Traditional American Values that protect our Outdoor Lifestyle. The group has more than 20,000 members from all 50 states, 2,200 of whom reside in Wisconsin. Earlier this month, the group sent a letter to Governor Evers' asking him to keep public hunting lands and fishing areas open to the public during the pandemic.

Wisconsin Lakeshore Business Association was created to sustain Lake Michigan's world class fishery and works diligently with the Wisconsin DNR to achieve those ends. WLBA provides a unified voice for private fishermen, shore anglers, and many other businesses and communities that rely on a robust healthy fishery.