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First name: Rob
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Comments: Hello US Forest Service,

My name is Rob Metcalf and I'm from Salt Lake City, UT. I am a software designer, husband, and father of a 1 year old daughter. For the last 12 years, I've spent the majority of my vacations in national parks to rock climb. I've climbed in Arches, Zion, Yosemite, and many others. Today I heard about the proposal to consider all climbing anchors as permanent installations.

From what I've read, it would 1) give rangers and supervisors of each park the ability to approve or disapprove each anchor or bolt that is placed on any climbing route and 2) require climbers to submit approval to replace or add bolts.

If I started climbing in the 1960s, I could see being in support of this project. I do not want people adding unnecessary bolts & anchors to wild places. The problem is that we do not live in the 1960s. Rock climbing has become increasingly popular, as I can tell from being out in the national parks. And my guess is it will continue to grow.

As climbing grows, there will be a growing number of people who learned to climb in a climbing gym, a place that is extremely safe. However, the outdoors, especially in places like Yosemite, is very different.

What I do not want to see is this: a ranger who doesn't like climbing. Either for personal reasons or because of the environmental impact of climbers and bolts. Given this power new power proposed in this project, this ranger decides to chop anchors and bolts from all climbing routes, demanding routes go back to how they were in the 60s.

The problem is that todays climbers do not understand how to climb safely in that style. Currently our national parks and forest lands are seeing an enormous increase in climbing related accidents, including deaths.

If bolts are chopped or anchors removed, I'm concerned we will have more accidents than ever before. We need to project climbers and make sure the power to decide how safe a route should be lies not in the hands of someone who could make a biased decision.

I am very weary of this. I hope this project is proposed not just by people protecting wilderness (which I certainly appreciate), but also climbers who care about the future of the sport, the next generation, and their safety.

Thank you,
Rob Metcalf