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First name: Thomas

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

I am writing in favor of the Protect Americas Rock Climbing act. Specifically, I would like to state that I think fixed anchors should not be banned outright as installations. I believe rock climbing in its current form is not possible without the occasional fixed anchor, and I believe rock climbing to be a positive for our nation.

I have been climbing for about 6 years now, and I can say without a doubt that rock climbing is an incredible pursuit. It brings me joy, helps me hone my discipline, and has increased my mental and physical health. I hope this can remain available to future generations.

More specifically in regards to the proposed ban on fixed anchors, I know climbing has taught me the importance of respecting the land and being self sufficient. Typically, a climber making the first ascent of a new route will attempt to leave as little fixed gear as possible. In other words, where fixed gear is left, the climber simply had no other option for safe passage. A climber will sometimes even risk a large fall by moving over a large piece of unprotectable rock without placing a bolt, simply to avoid extra fixed gear. These fixed anchors are paramount to these particular routes, and the consequences are very minimal. We are allowed to recreate and travel in the wilderness, why not be allowed to do so safely? I think if number of people is the issue, a permit system would be more effective.

Another point I would like to make is that a blanket ban would leave out the possibility of nuance at the local level. Climbing is a highly localized activity, with deep traditions that govern how climbers use the rock. Coordination with the local climbing coalition will yield positive results towards whatever goals the local land managers have prioritized. One great example that comes to mind is the Flatirons climbing coalition in Boulder Colorado. Here, the coalition works with the open space mountain parks organization to determine what routes will be bolted. In addition, the Flatirons climbing coalition organizes trail days and cleanup days, making the whole of the Flatirons better. This creates a channel of coordination between the climbers and the government. A blanket ban would jeopardize this symbiosis.

Please consider working with the access fund to protect America's climbing. We have a rich tradition here, and I personally am so excited to get out and see our beautiful wilderness from the awe inspiring positions that a few bolts and a whole lot of knowledge, training, skill, perseverance and tenacity will allow

Thank you for reading this,

TJ