

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/4/2024 10:21:22 PM

First name: Jeremy

Last name: Norton

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Our country is legendary around the world for our national park and forest system. As a subculture, American climbing is a top destination for mountain enthusiasts from all over. And American climbing is rooted in accessing beautiful places while being minimally impactful, enough to simply stay safe. If this proposal passes as written, so many of our great climbs, from the Sierra to the White Mountains, could cease to exist, and American climbing as we know it will be, at the very least, subdued.

Less exciting, but more important, is the safety these fixed anchors provide. Climbers will always use removable gear for protection when possible, but rely on fixed gear to get through certain belays or descents safely. It is understandable to want to limit bolt-intensive face climbing, but that is very rare in a wilderness setting, so much so that bolts are often chopped by other climbers who are appalled at what was done to the face! This bill may reduce a few bolt-heavy climbs in protected areas, but largely it will eliminate the minimally impactful climbs that have bolts only for rappels every 100ft and are otherwise impossible.

Obviously in the perfect world, as written, MRAs can be written to make exceptions and document the fixed gear on every climb. However, [mountainproject.com](http://mountainproject.com), the premier climbing website, has nearly 250,000 routes listed in the US (and many more not added to the site)! There will never be a chance that the land managers will have the resources to review every route. Even if so - gear is exposed to the elements, and sometimes a climber will need to make an on-the-fly decision to modify/amend the anchor for their own safety. Or sometimes rescue service will need to use the fixed gear to aide someone in need.

Climbers are, at heart, lovers of all things natural and wild. We do, and always have, strive to be a self-regulating group, because although we want access to more climbs and areas, we dare not risk tarnishing the places we dream of. And unspoiled wilderness is to be the most respected. So we must be, as we always have been, stewards of the land. By allowing climbers to safely use the wilderness areas with fixed gear, our parks will have increased interest, appreciation, and therefore conservation. To restrict bolts is to restrict climbers... is to restrict the love for our wilderness.