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Comments: I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to the recently proposed draft policies by the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) that would classify fixed anchors, including bolts, pitons, and slings, as "prohibited installations" in America's Wilderness areas. This decision has the potential to adversely impact nearly 60 years of sustainable Wilderness climbing precedent and jeopardize the safety and legacy of America's climbing community.

The proposed policies would not only hinder Wilderness exploration but also threaten the existence of longstanding established routes across the United States. The prohibition on both new and existing anchors could obstruct climbers' ability to replace old, unsafe bolts, posing a significant risk to the safety of our community.

As an alpine multipitch sport climber, I rely on anchor systems such as bolts and slings to keep not only myself and partners safe while engaging with and enjoying our country's wild places. Providing a safe way to recreate in nature not only benefits the individual lives of people, but also provides opportunities for action through advocacy for these great places.

It is crucial to recognize that climbing is not only a recreational activity but also a cultural and historical legacy that deserves preservation. The proposed policies run counter to the spirit of bipartisan efforts in Congress to ensure responsible climbing practices while maintaining the integrity of our Wilderness areas. I urge the National Park Service to reconsider these policies and align with the legislative initiatives that are currently progressing through Congress.

I strongly believe that a collaborative approach, involving input from the climbing community and stakeholders, is essential to finding a balanced and sustainable solution. It is my hope that the National Park Service will take into account the concerns of climbers, acknowledge the bipartisan support for legislation protecting climbing access, and work towards policies that uphold the safety, tradition, and legacy of America's climbing community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that you will consider the broader implications of these policies and work towards a solution that preserves both our natural landscapes and the rich history of climbing in America's Wilderness areas.

Sincerely,

Arran Fagan