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Comments: As an avid rock climber and a passionate advocate for the preservation of wilderness areas, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed law, specifically the fixed anchor provision within FSM 2355. While I appreciate the efforts to manage climbing activities and safeguard our wilderness areas, the proposed regulation on fixed anchors threatens to undermine the very essence of rock climbing and its longstanding relationship with American wilderness.

Rock climbing, by its very nature, is an activity that embodies the American spirit of exploration and adventure. It is an activity that teaches respect for nature, fosters self-reliance, and nurtures a sense of stewardship towards our natural landscapes. The use of fixed anchors has been a part of this tradition for decades, enabling climbers to safely explore and enjoy our nation's majestic cliffs and mountains. These anchors, contrary to the concerns expressed, very rarely detract from the wilderness experience. In fact, they often exist unnoticed by the vast majority of wilderness visitors, harmoniously blending into the landscape.

The proposed regulation on fixed anchors appears to be a solution in search of a problem. The impact of these anchors on the wilderness character is minimal, especially when compared to other human activities that leave far more significant footprints. Climbers are among the most environmentally conscious and low-impact users of wilderness areas. We take great care in preserving the natural state of the landscapes we explore, often engaging in conservation efforts and practicing leave-no-trace ethics.

Introducing stringent regulations on fixed anchors will not only disrupt the existing culture of rock climbing but also potentially lead to unintended environmental impacts. Climbers may be forced to seek alternative, less secure means of ascent, which could lead to increased erosion, vegetation damage, and other forms of environmental degradation. Moreover, such regulations could inadvertently increase the risk of accidents, as climbers may have to rely on less secure natural anchors.

Furthermore, the spirit of rock climbing aligns closely with the values of freedom and adventure that are deeply rooted in American culture. By imposing restrictions on fixed anchors, we risk diluting these values and denying future generations the opportunity to experience the wilderness as we have - as a space for challenge, discovery, and personal growth.

In conclusion, while I stand with the efforts to protect our wilderness areas, I strongly urge a reconsideration of the proposed regulation on fixed anchors. Let us work together to find a balance that respects both the preservation of our natural heritage and the rich tradition of rock climbing that so many Americans hold dear.

Respectfully,

Scott Gilmore, MD

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