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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am a high school science teacher and avid climber who lives south of Asheville, NC. I am writing in opposition to FSM 2355. It must first be acknowledged that fixed anchors are crucial life-saving hardware for climbers. As such, there already exist numerous non-profits who work closely with federal partners across the country to place bolts in a minimally invasive manner, replace aging or unsafe bolts, and educate the public on LNT principles and best bolting practices. In western North Carolina specifically, the Carolina Climbers Coalition, Access Fund, and American Alpine Club work diligently and in good faith to further the goal of safe, minimally invasive climbing on our public lands.

Such changes as proposed in FSM 2355 would upend the partnerships discussed above and threaten the safety of roped climbing in all its forms. If every bolt replacement were subject to pre-approval on a case by case basis, replacement would slow to such a pace as to jeopardize the safety of thousands of climbers. As a result, accidents resulting from the failure of poorly maintained bolts would increase and strain already over-taxed SAR teams. Furthermore, making the placement of new bolts more onerous would slow the development of new routes or climbing areas at a time when climbing is rapidly increasing in popularity. The resulting concentration of climbers in non-wilderness areas would further degrade already crowded recreation areas. Lastly, fixed anchors are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. The resulting contradiction between the language of the Wilderness Act and that within FSM 2355 would be subject to legal challenges from the onset.

In conclusion, FSM 2355 has the potential to significantly threaten the safety of climbers and rescue personal while fostering environmental degradation in already impacted areas, impoverishing the human experience.

Sincerely,

John