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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it may concern,

My name is Brendan Cathcart. I am a Registered Respiratory Therapist in the state of California, a voter and tax payer. Above most things I am also a climber. I live within minutes of vast wilderness areas in California and spend countless hours recreating, exploring, and having life changing adventures in these areas every year. I climb the peaks of the Sierra Nevada, boulder in the famed Buttermilk Country, and sport climb in the otherwise neglected Owens Gorge. Climbing is and will always be the great passion of my life. And now it seems to me lawmakers have intent to, in essence, do away almost completely, with the legality in which climbers recreate.

Learning about these new propositions to outlaw and regulate fixed climbing anchors in wilderness areas immediately struck me as illogical and without foresight. It is not hyperbolic to say that outlawing the use of existing anchors and the creation of new routes BY climbers effectively ends the sport of rock climbing.

The most important thing I can communicate to you is that climbing anchors, usually in the form of expansion bolts, are absolutely essential to the safety of climbers to enjoy beautiful routes. Without them climbs simply cannot be climbed. They are the bullet proof part of a climber's safety system.

Expansion bolts have been an accepted form of climbing protection for over 100 years, and the technology has only been improving and lessening the impact to wilderness. The bolts have always been placed by a first ascensionist, who is then critiqued by later climbers. If a climb is deemed in need of upgrades to its safety hardware, the climbing community has always done so, on their own dime to make subsequent climbers climb with security and enjoyment.

Prohibiting climbing anchors will surely create detrimental safety issues. The taxpayer funded SAR teams will surely be working overtime. (These teams are typically volunteers, and frequently need to place "installations" to complete daring high mountain rescues.

When climbing in the remote back country, on an established route. Fixed, permanent anchors provide a safe means of ascent and, if weather turns dangerous, a safe and quick form of descent.

Ernest Hemingway once said, "There are only three sports: bullfighting, motor racing, and mountaineering; all the rest are merely games." He is absolutely right. Climbing is one of the most historically rich endeavors a person can embark on. A sport that the US has always been on the vanguard of.

Lastly, allow me to beg of you to vote against the installation of this moronic and senseless interpretation of climbing anchors and systems. The climbs that exist in wilderness have been crafted with care and possess an enduring beauty that only climbers can know. If climbers are no longer allowed in these places, then no one will know it at all.