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Comments: Physically attaching humans to mountainsides with a rope or other safety equipment is fundamental to keeping people safe at any height over body length above ground. Unlike skiing, where people are moving through mountain terrain mostly unroped, climbing and mountaineering greatly increase the safety of the people involved through this physical attachment to the mountain on both ascent and descent. Systematically removing the ability for people to keep themselves safe by removing existing anchors, prohibiting future anchors and limiting the replacement of existing anchors would foment an unconscionable and devastating decision by our land managers. I fully recognize it cannot be a "free for all" out there; however, making it illegal for climbers to utilize fixed anchors for ascent and descent would directly affect the numbers of accidents in the mountains. Places where existing anchors remain would become overrun as "new" climbers without the ability or experience to anchor themselves in less-travelled or anchor-free terrain would be funnelled. This would also increase accidents with too many people confined to only a few routes with anchors due to crowding, rockfall, congestion, etc.

As a professional mountain guide working internationally for over 20 years, I have witnessed death from anchor failure when public tried to get themselves off the mountain of their own volition. Without fixed anchors people have to leave something behind to rappel off of and many people don't know how to safely do this. They rely heavily on fixed anchors to experience these places safely. We cannot take those away from such people. In the absence of fixed anchors, not only do they leave behind anchors that may be unsafely used by future climbers, they leave hundreds of lbs of plastic (nylon) in our mountains. I have carried out many hundreds of lbs of slings and ropes left behind in my decades of work in our lands. But, at least, most guides are able to provide a service by updating, renewing and replacing the fixed anchors we come across so that us, our clients and other climbers are able to safely ascend and descend these routes. Government bodies limiting the public's ability to keep themselves safely and physically attached to mountainsides is essentially banning climbing, or at least climbing safely. Not only would such steps demolish the guiding profession (because we are paid to keep our clients safe but disallowed from doing that by government agencies) it would directly contribute to accidents and fatalities.

One need only consider the world's population. Is it decreasing or increasing? Will more and more people populate the planet? Will more people look to wilderness for inspiration, reprieve, relaxation, adventure and experiences? Will our governments empower people to do so safely and sustainably? Or will they attempt to stem the flow of an unstoppable force while directly contributing to deaths of climbers and mountaineers along the way? Land managers should be empowering professionals to update, maintain and build fixed anchor systems, working with the experts and professionals rather than limiting them. All public deserve the right to safely experience our wilderness, with or without the guidance of professionals. Removing these safety systems and prohibiting implementation and/or maintenance of fixed anchors would represent an unsustainable approach to mountain safety and be an egregious error for all members of public.