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First name: Andrew

Last name: Weygandt

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear reader,

I am a hospital chaplain, an environmentalist, and an outdoor recreator. I hike, ski, paddle, camp, bike, backpack, volunteer for trail maintenance, and climb. I am very concerned about proposed legislation that would do away with climbing anchors in National Parks and National Wilderness areas. These anchors are essential to the sport of climbing and help keep it safe while also protecting the environment from destruction by less-ideal gear.

Not long ago, I trusted my life to fixed anchors as I rappelled down from climbing Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. Those anchors have served generations of climbers and speak to the long history of climbing in our National Parks and Wilderness Areas. They added safety in allowing my team to move confidently through cliffy terrain as well as by expediting our time setting up for the rappel in an area known for afternoon thunderstorms. Nine decades ago, my grandfather benefited from anchors as he enjoyed the budding sport of climbing in the Sierra Nevadas before heading off to medical school and serving as a doctor in WWII.

I believe that fixed anchors are essential to a climber's safety and truly reduce the overall impact on the environment. Given the rich history of the sport in wilderness spaces, it is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance prohibiting anchors. Such policies will inevitably lead to safety issues for climbers as will be evidenced by accident reports. Please do not threaten our country's rich legacy of wilderness climbing and exploration. Additionally, the prohibition of new routes or new anchors is unenforceable and will only serve to frustrate and stifle future generations in their enjoyment of the wilderness.

Thank you for time and attention. For my community's sake, I hope you hear our pleas.

Sincerely,

Rev. Andrew M Weygandt