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Comments: Dear reader,

I am writing as a concerned lover of outdoor lands. National parks and forests have been an integral part of my life from when I was a young child and my family went on summer road trips to national parks across the country. It was from these experiences that I developed a love and appreciation for the outdoor wilderness and the healing power of being in nature. I'm in my 30's now and live in a crowded metropolitan area. My career keeps me in the city, but almost every weekend I can, I go into the mountains to hike and climb. I discovered climbing in the Sierras six years ago, and it has enriched my life in ways I never imagined. I often seek out scrambles across ridges and through valleys in Tuolumne and surrounding areas, and beyond the joy I've found in these spaces, these experiences have also taught me how to manage fear, evaluate risk, persevere in times of suffering, and make decisions under stress. More than anything else, scrambling and rock climbing serve as reminders of how unpredictable the mountains can be and how precious life is.

Many people find joy in the mountains, and climb for many reasons. As such I agree that it is important to evaluate how to best preserve the wilderness areas we have given the increase in visitors to these areas. But, in my opinion, banning the unauthorized use of fixed anchors is not the answer. I have had several close calls with sudden thunderstorms in the Sierras while high up on rock walls, and have had to leave gear behind to get myself and others down safely. Sometimes these are in areas on routes that are relatively high traffic, and in cases for which time is of essence and speed a matter of safety, having fixed anchors at these points can make the difference between getting down safely or not.

Just as establishing hiking trails is essential for decreasing small side trails and erosion in fragile environments, establishing fixed anchors can achieve similar benefits on rock walls by preventing damage to trees and bushes (from slings). This, in addition to the added aspect of safety it provides when the weather turns suddenly, I think will better ensure the preservation of wilderness for future generations to come.