

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 5:19:06 AM

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Comments: Hello! I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed prohibition of fixed climbing anchors in wilderness areas.

As a longtime climber, outdoor enthusiast and conservationist, it saddens me to read the proposal to limit the use, enjoyment and celebration of our country's most beautiful and wild lands. I would like to offer up my two cents about why this proposal would not only put lives at risk, but also go against the protections and harmony that the climbing community and wilderness authorities and protectors have long had. Climbers have long (before the Wilderness Act) cared for and pioneered the outdoor sport exploration of some of the most beautiful and remote corners of our nation, leading to increased popularity and reverence for these incredible wildernesses.

America's vibrant climbing history predates the Wilderness Act and is a beautiful and overwhelmingly conservationist community of individuals invested in preserving and exploring our wild lands. The proposed prohibition acts in direct conflict with this historical and thriving legacy that has walked together with the popularizing of national parks and conservation efforts of federal agencies.

After such a long and amicable precedent that has been set, allowed, and managed by federal agencies long ago to allow climbing anchors in Wilderness areas, it is unrealistic and unreasonable to make a change to this functional and beneficial system that has been in place for decades. Land managers should be encouraging the use and exploration of these Wilderness areas, in such ways that climbers are able to make the necessary spur-of-the-moment decisions when they are navigating this kind of complex terrain.

I would also like to clarify that fixed anchors are certainly not "installations" under the Wilderness Act. They are a completely essential part of climbing safety and thereby minimize the necessity of costly wilderness rescues. They offer a way for climbers/adventurers to safely enjoy the wilderness areas with relatively little footprint.

Prohibiting the use of fixed anchors poses a terrifying safety risk for everyone who participates in this recreation. The prohibition puts up unnecessary barriers to making safe and practical decisions, and it is unrealistic to think that an external authority could have the expertise (nor the bandwidth) to make these decisions for every climbing. The climbing community is overwhelmingly dedicated to self-monitoring the safety of our climbing areas, the gear that we use, and the anchors that we place and RE-place when necessary. This prohibition would inevitably delay or decline these necessary decisions and put people and wilderness in completely unnecessary physical danger.

Rock climbing is only growing in popularity as a means of experiencing our national parks. It therefore deserves the support of our Forest Service and national governing bodies.

Thank you so much for considering this incredibly important piece of legislation and the effects that it has on a large and growing group of Americans.

-Anna