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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed policy that would ban fixed anchors, including bolts, pitons, and slings, in America's Wilderness areas. As an avid climber and a supporter of preserving our climbing legacy, I believe these policies pose significant threats to both the safety of climbers and the rich climbing heritage of our nation.

Fixed anchors are an integral part of climbers' safety systems and should not be classified as "prohibited installations" under the Wilderness Act. Over the past 60 years, climbers have responsibly used fixed anchors, contributing to sustainable Wilderness climbing practices without compromising the integrity of these areas. I urge you to consider maintaining the existing climbing policies that have allowed for the judicious use of fixed anchors while preserving the character of Wilderness areas.

The proposed prohibition on fixed anchors, including existing ones, will not only hinder Wilderness exploration but also jeopardize the safety of the climbing community. Climbers regularly engage in the necessary and immediate maintenance of fixed anchors, and imposing unnecessary obstacles to these efforts could lead to safety issues. We need a management approach that incentivizes safe anchor replacement without risking the removal of established climbing routes.

Moreover, the timing of these proposals is concerning, considering the bipartisan Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act and America's Outdoor Recreation Act making their way through Congress. If passed, these acts would direct your agencies to develop new national climbing management guidance, prioritizing safe and sustainable access to Wilderness climbing.

I urge you to reconsider these policies and work collaboratively with the climbing community to find solutions that protect Wilderness character while ensuring the safety and continued enjoyment of climbers. Prohibiting fixed anchors would not only obstruct exploration but also jeopardize America's rich climbing legacy, erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements.

In conclusion, I request that you support the ongoing legislative efforts and engage in a constructive dialogue with the climbing community to develop policies that balance the preservation of Wilderness areas with the needs of climbers.