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To Whom It May Concern:

My comments are to ask you to consider these points as you ponder whether to make changes to the bolting system in our beloved mountains. I come from a long line of climbers in my family who love and cherish our ability to enjoy our mountain crags. We have spent many family vacations climbing and, my husband and I have established numerous climbing routes in many of these areas. We would be devastated to have this privilege and right to climb taken away from us because of a lack of understanding. Will you please read the points below which convey a climber's viewpoint? Thank you so much.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal. I have confidence that you will understand our passion towards this sport, and our love and stewardship for our mountains.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Vickie Smoot

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