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Comments: I am writing concerning new proposed policy on fixed anchors in America's wilderness lands. As a dedicated climber for the past 15 years, I am writing to share my deep interest and concerns regarding these proposed regulations. Many of my most cherished memories are days spent climbing in the wilderness, and in almost every case some amount of fixed gear is needed to safely have the adventure.

Climbing, a well-established and cherished recreational activity, has been a traditional use of our national parks and wilderness lands for decades.

I am at heart a conservationist, and advocate for wilderness protection to expand. While I acknowledge the need to limit certain practices, such as extensive bolting in wilderness areas, a complete ban on fixed anchors would undermine the traditional use of these lands, I believe many limiting factors, such as the requirement to use a hand drill to place bolts in wilderness do a very good job of keeping bolting to a minimum, placing bolts this way is a very difficult, time consuming process and bolts placed in this way are very much a necessity for safety, not a convenience.

I fear that subjecting every fixed anchor to the review of someone who is not an expert in the nuances of climbing in a particular area is an almost impossible task, and as such many areas will respond with a blanket ban on climbing to avoid having to invest in the experience and expertise to understand the activity they are asked to regulate, this is a huge step back in regards to access to outdoor recreation.

I understand and appreciate the need for environmental conservation, especially given climbing's increasing popularity. However, a comprehensive evaluation of climbing's actual environmental impact is crucial. Many fixed anchors are placed with the intent of limiting impact by reducing erosion at cliff edges or damage to vegetation, while many permitted installations such as trail construction, have a more visible and lasting effect.

It is my sincere hope that these comments are given consideration. Most climbers, like myself, find self-affirmation and fulfillment through our activities, and pride ourselves on leaving minimal impact. Climbing unexplored rock faces in our nation's wilderness is a deeply rewarding experience. We are a supportive community committed to wilderness preservation, but within reasonable boundaries, impact will always exist, and in the case of climbing, fixed anchors are often an attempt to minimize that impact, and the regulation of them by people who do not understand the activity risk more crowding in accessible areas, as well eliminating an opportunity to experience the wilderness in a way I think is very compatible with the wilderness ethos.

Please approach this matter with care and thoughtfulness, recognizing the diverse ways individuals connect with and appreciate our wilderness and keep climbing and fixed anchors legal in the wilderness.