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Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am deeply troubled by the content of these proposed directives. I think that climbers as a group, with their special knowledge of the safety requirements for a given climb, can and must be entrusted with decisions concerning the placement and replacement of fixed anchors, with as few restrictions as possible.

I have been climbing for 6 years, and throughout that time, rock climbing in America's wilderness has been the defining joy of my life. Nothing else comes close to the thrill of freedom, the pleasure of honing a skill, the satisfaction of rising to challenges, the camaraderie and the mental and physical health benefits that climbing has brought me. Fixed anchors are an essential component of the safety infrastructure of any climb, and particularly sport climbs. Sport climbing is much more accessible to diverse groups than traditional climbing, as it is less expensive, less risky, and requires less advanced knowledge to begin. Sport climbing is the way that I was introduced into climbing and remains my passion and the passion of many of my friends. Discouraging the maintenance and installation of fixed anchors would have a disproportionate penalty on sport climbing compared to other types of climbing, one which I think would be terribly unfortunate.

I respect the ethos of traditional climbers who wish to preserve a wilder and bolder experience, but I believe few people would argue against the maintenance of anchors on existing classic beloved climbs, trad or sport. I also think it is worth pointing out that a typical fixed anchor comprises two 1/2 inch bolts with hangers that can be painted to match the color of the rock, and usually sits tens or hundreds of feet off the ground. I would argue that this is hardly an intrusion on the aesthetic purity of a wilderness area, and that the incredible experience it affords climbers is well worth the difference it does make.

This proposed policy, which I recognize does not outright prohibit bolting, threatens to make maintenance and installation of anchors in some areas so difficult as to constitute a prohibition in practice. I urge you to reconsider it and grant the climbing community more freedom to manage our beloved wilderness climbing areas, and trust that we will do so with a thoughtful balance of aesthetics, safety, and accessibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.