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Comments: Climbing has long been considered a legitimate use of wilderness areas. Climbers in general are a user group who take stewardship and care over the environments in which they recreate. The annual Yosemite clean-up is an excellent example of climbers coming together to maintain and conserve the vertical environments in which we take pleasure in spending time.

Fixed anchors are a necessary part of climbing safely. Fixed anchors are a low-impact, inert way climbers can reliably establish access to the vertical world. Fixed anchors are often hard to see from the base of rock faces and are generally both visually and physically low impact, considerably less than many other activities that are legitimate uses of wilderness areas. Prohibiting fixed anchors will make the activity of climbing considerably more dangerous, and will force poor maintenance of existing anchors, as well as more risky behaviors. Areas without fixed anchors often get littered with cord and slings left behind as climbers try to rappel safely off a cliff face.

Further, as a taxpayer, I worry that this legislation will necessitate the formation of an administrative arm of the enforcing agencies which will be impossible to adequately fund or operate. Doing so will create tension between climbers and park rangers which has been carefully built and maintained over recent years.

The complexity of establishing new routes, especially on large walls or deep into the wilderness does not allow for a complete understanding of what exists until you venture into the unknown on the wall itself. Therefore, to be able to plan for and gain approval for all the placements of anchors on a route is not only impractical but virtually impossible. As climbing is explicitly recognized as a legitimate use in the wilderness this stipulation would virtually remove that recognition, and stall all climbing to only those routes currently established, this would strip all future generations of the possibility to imagine the impossible and venture out into the unknown, things which are so strongly linked to the importance of maintaining wilderness in the first place.