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Comments: To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to the National Park Service (NPS) and United States Forest Service (USFS) proposal to ban climbing bolts, a proposal that not only threatens the safety of climbers but also imposes unwarranted barriers to those new to the sport. Fixed anchors serve as a vital component of climbers' safety systems, and their judicious use has been permitted for over half a century under existing climbing policies. Contrary to the proposed ban, fixed anchors are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act, and adhering to established climbing policies is crucial in preserving Wilderness character while facilitating primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to introduce new guidance policies that prohibit climbing anchors across the country when they have managed, authorized, and allowed fixed anchors for decades. Prohibiting fixed anchors not only hampers regular maintenance efforts undertaken by the climbing community but also creates unnecessary safety issues by impeding critical decisions that must be made in the moment. This proposal introduces an unnecessary authorization process that jeopardizes the efficient and safe replacement of fixed anchors, undermining the very principles of safety that it claims to protect.

Moreover, the proposed ban on fixed anchors erects a significant barrier to newcomers in the climbing community, requiring them to possess the skills and financial resources for trad climbing. This move obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas and jeopardizes America's rich climbing legacy, putting some of the world's greatest climbing achievements at risk of being erased. Climbing management policies must prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal and allow climbers to navigate Wilderness areas with the flexibility necessary for the complex vertical terrain they encounter.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the proposal to ban climbing bolts, as it not only compromises the safety of climbers but also imposes unjustifiable barriers to entry for those new to the sport. Let us preserve the longstanding tradition of responsible climbing in our Wilderness areas, safeguard the rich climbing legacy that defines our nation, and continue to let climbing be an accessible sport.