



710 10th St. Suite 100 • Golden, Colorado 80401 • EIN: 13-1611981
303.384.0110 • americanalpineclub.org

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair, U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1203 Longworth House Office Building

RE: June 21st, 2023, Committee Hearing on HR 1380 Protect America's Rock Climbing Act (PARC Act)

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the American Alpine Club, thank you for holding a hearing centering on bills that will certainly enhance and improve access to outdoor recreation on federal public lands to all Americans. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide a comment on The Protect America's Rock Climbing Act, H.R. 1380.

The American Alpine Club (AAC), based in Golden, Colorado, is a national climbing and mountaineering organization that represents the interests and values of both our members and the greater climbing community which consists of more than 8 million people and generates \$12.45 billion a year for the outdoor recreation economy. Created in 1902, our work centers around activating our members in support of the protection of climbing areas and critical landscapes, advancing access to public lands and climbing for all Americans, protecting and supporting outdoor recreation communities, and mitigating the climate crisis through thoughtful land management practices.

H.R. 1380, The Protect America's Rock Climbing Act

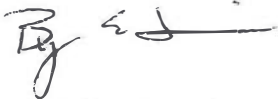
Many people enjoy their first time climbing outside in Wilderness through a facilitated recreation experience offered by groups like the American Alpine Club's volunteer chapters, other recreation non-profit organizations, or through a guide or outfitter. Specifically, many of the AAC's members work as climbing guides, or utilize guiding services to experience new climbing destinations or obtain climbing education. Guided recreation experiences of this nature, utilizing fixed-anchors, offer climbers new and experienced alike, the opportunity to participate in the sport in a safe environment that not only offers participants the ability to gain new skills, but the ability to learn how to recreate responsibly and be conscientious visitors in Wilderness. These facilitated experiences are particularly valuable for helping to connect underserved or environmental justice communities who have historically been deprived of engaging in recreation opportunities on public lands.

Wilderness plays a vital role in American climbing legacy and future. Some of the most iconic and historic climbing in the country is located within Wilderness, including areas like El Capitan, The Diamond on Longs Peak, Joshua Tree's Wonderland of Rocks, and North Carolina's Linville Gorge. Climbers have historically relied on the legal and conditional use, placement, and maintenance of bolts and other fixed anchors in Wilderness. These anchors help keep these areas pristine, while still allowing climbers, search and rescue teams, and others to safely ascend and descend technical routes. The Protect America's Rock Climbing Act would bring consistency to federal management of climbing in Wilderness areas across land management agencies, including the management of fixed anchors, bolts, and other hardware. It enjoys broad support from recreationists and conservationists across the country.

Conclusion

We appreciate the committee's thoughtful work to improve safety and access to outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans on public lands across the country. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in. As this process continues, we look forward to serving as a resource to the committee and welcome any further opportunity to be involved in assisting in advancing access to recreation on public lands.

Respectfully,



Byron Harvison
Director, Policy and Government Affairs
The American Alpine Club

CC:

Benjamin Gabriel, CEO, American Alpine Club
Nicholas Ridley, Programs Project Manager, American Alpine Club