

# **A Letter from the USA Climbing Athletes' Commission**

*In Support of the National Training Center*

March 2026

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As members of the USA Climbing Athletes' Commission, we are elected by our fellow athletes to represent their voice and advocate on their behalf within our sport's governance. As competitors who train and compete under the USA Climbing banner, we write today independently in strong support of the National Training Center in Salt Lake City. This facility is needed to help make the US more competitive on the international stage, to have a dedicated event stage, and to provide education and development opportunities for our broader community. We believe the NTC is foundational to athlete development and the continued growth of competition climbing in the United States.

Competition climbing is now firmly established on the Olympic and soon to be Paralympic stage. American athletes have risen to meet that moment, earning medals and respect at the highest levels of the sport. But the reality behind those results is that our athletes have done so on their own without a permanent, purpose-built training facility. While other nations and other sporting bodies invest heavily in dedicated centers for their national teams, American climbers have relied on borrowed gym time, temporary warehouse setups, and personal resourcefulness.

The National Training Center will provide dedicated, competition-standard terrain for bouldering, lead, para, and speed climbing, along with strength and conditioning resources, recovery space, and nutrition support. A permanent facility allows our coaches and routesetters to create training environments that simulate World Cup, World Championship, and Olympic conditions on a consistent basis, building on the support local gyms have generously provided over the years. Many of us have seen firsthand how the resources available to an athlete directly shape their performance, growth, and long-term potential. We expect the NTC to be a resource for athletes across the country, not just for those living in Salt Lake City, providing for the broader climbing community through the programming and opportunities it plans to offer.

The NTC is intended to represent something larger than elite performance. It will aim to elevate access to educational programming, host youth development camps, provide more coaching and routesetting clinics, and offer training programs that strengthen the pipeline from local gym teams across the country to the competitive national and international stage. Raising the standard of routesetting and coaching nationwide benefits every gym and every climber in the

country. It will also provide a home for Para Climbing athletes, ensuring that adaptive climbing receives the same investment in preparation and development as every other discipline. The facility will create opportunities that do not currently exist at this scale anywhere in the United States.

Commercial climbing gyms are where most of us fell in love with climbing. They are where youth teams train, where communities form, and where the energy of this sport lives. As athletes, we can speak to the training, development, and event-hosting value the NTC will bring to the sport nationally, and our belief that the growth of the sport's visibility benefits everyone in the ecosystem. Purpose-built hosting facilities create incredible competition environments, both for athletes and spectators alike, which is crucial for growing engagement and viewership. The visitors and international events the NTC will bring to Salt Lake City will introduce new people to climbing, and local gyms are where those people will continue their journey.

We are aware that questions have been raised about the NTC's impact on commercial climbing gyms. As athletes, we are not in a position to speak to business projections or operating models. What we can say is that competition-style terrain, with its higher grades, lower density, and frequent turnover, serves a fundamentally different purpose than the welcoming, broad-appeal environment that makes local gyms successful. At the same time, we do not want to gatekeep these resources for the national team alone. A facility with public access has the potential to inspire the broader community and create opportunities for those who may not otherwise have access to competition-level training, or climbing at all.

We recognize the complexity of this project and the importance of continued dialogue with all stakeholders. We are proud that this project has included athlete voices throughout its development, and we believe that continued engagement will only strengthen the outcome. We also believe the climbing community should hear directly from the athletes whose lives have been shaped by this sport. Every one of us started climbing somewhere, with no guarantee it would become anything more than a hobby. Along the way, someone invested in us, and that investment changed the course of our lives. The National Training Center is that same kind of investment, made permanent by USA Climbing in ways we never could have believed growing up, and made available to every athlete who comes next.

*Respectfully,*

**USA Climbing Athletes' Commission**