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Comments: USFS, Sen. Mike Lee,

I write in firm opposition to the Forest Service's reckless and profoundly misguided proposal to reconstruct the collapsed Quonset hut in the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness. This plan is an affront to the very definition and purpose of Wilderness as established by the 1964 Wilderness Act.

The Mount Timpanogos Wilderness is not a theme park, a historical museum, or a recreational convenience zone. It is one of the few sacred spaces left where nature is permitted to govern itself, free from mechanized disturbance and human arrogance. The proposal to invade this protected sanctuary with helicopters, jackhammers, cement mixers, and other mechanized equipment is a violent disruption of the natural order and a betrayal of the public trust charged with protecting it.

Let us be clear: Wilderness does not need fixing. The collapse of the hut in 2021-2022 was not a tragedy-it was a testament to the Wilderness reclaiming itself. The structure, which had long outlived its questionable utility, fell to the forces of time, weather, and gravity-precisely the kinds of wild processes that define and enrich these rare protected landscapes. To rebuild it is to reverse the very act of wilderness designation.

The Forest Service's assertion that rebuilding this anachronistic eyesore would "improve the area's wilderness character" is absurd and insulting. No one comes to Mount Timpanogos to marvel at metal walls and concrete. They come for silence, solitude, wildness, and the humbling experience of being a small part of something greater than ourselves.

This structure was deemed unnecessary decades ago. Its prior association with massive human traffic that ultimately led to ecological degradation makes it even less appropriate for preservation, let alone reconstruction. If the Forest Service is sincere about protecting wilderness values, it should pursue the "no action" alternative and allow the remnants of the hut to decay naturally-or remove them using non-mechanized, wilderness-compatible methods.

This is a moral moment. Either we choose to honor the Wilderness Act and its ecocentric mandate to let nature be, or we bend once again to anthropocentric nostalgia and convenience. Wilderness is not about what we want-it is about what wildness needs to remain whole.

Leave the Wilderness wild. Let the past be reclaimed by the earth. Do not desecrate Mount Timpanogos with machines and metal. Withdraw this proposal.

Sincerely,

Steve Stieler