

in the areas where residential areas press against the forests.

Today, I am introducing two bills that respond to at least some aspects of these two serious problems. One will provide protection for roadless areas in the Congressional District I represent. The other would put new emphasis on cooperative efforts to restore forest lands and prevent catastrophic forest fires in areas of high risk throughout Colorado.

PROTECTION FOR ROADLESS AREAS

The first bill is the Northern Front Range Roadless Area and Mountain Backdrop Protection Act. Under that bill, the Forest Service would manage over 80,000 acres on the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest as "protected roadless areas." All of these areas are within Colorado's Second Congressional District. They are areas that the Forest Service identified as roadless in its 1997 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Arapaho-Roosevelt. Most of these areas would be appropriate additions to existing wilderness areas, and they are also included in President Clinton's Roadless Conservation Proposal for the national forests.

The Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest is within a few minutes drive for more than 2.5 million people in the Front Range Denver-metro area. As a result, it is experiencing increasing use of all kinds, especially recreational use. I have supported the President's roadless area initiative in part because I know how those increasing pressures are affecting the Arapaho-Roosevelt and the other national forests in Colorado. And, with respect to relevant lands within my own Congressional District, I want to build on what the President has proposed. So, my first bill would undergird the President's initiative with a statutory requirement that the Forest Service manage these areas to preserve their roadless qualities until Congress determines otherwise.

With this interim protection in place, the bill would also require the Forest Service to study and evaluate these areas and then make recommendations to Congress regarding their future management. That report would be submitted within three years. In the meantime, and until Congress decides otherwise, these roadless areas would be managed under the "recommended for wilderness" management category in the Forest Plan, and require the Forest Service to study and report to Congress in three years about management options for these lands. The report would include recommendations about the suitability of wilderness designation for some or all of these lands but can also include any other recommendations the Secretary of Agriculture decides to make. The bill will thus maintain all options and allow the Congress to ultimately resolve the status of these roadless lands.

ROCKY FLATS MOUNTAIN BACKDROP STUDY

The bill also contains a section intended to help local communities preserve the Front Range Mountain Backdrop just west of the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site.

As all Coloradans know, Rocky Flats is just a few miles north and west of Denver. Once, it was a nuclear weapons production facility. But now that mission is over and the task of the Rocky Flats workforce is to carry out a thorough, prompt, and effective cleanup and closure. I strongly support that effort, and am also working to have the prairie land within the site's 6,500 acres protected as wildlife habitat and open space. But I think we need to look beyond the site's perimeters.

So far, development in the Denver-metro area has not yet surrounded the Rocky Flats site. However, growth and sprawl are heading its way. Now is the time to shape the future of this part of the Front Range, and I think we have a real but fleeting opportunity to establish Rocky Flats and lands to its west as a "crown jewel" of open space and wildlife habitat that will be of inestimable value for Coloradans for generations to come. I also think the federal government can help achieve that goal. So, my bill would call on the Forest Service to examine the land ownership patterns west of Rocky Flats, identify lands that are undeveloped, and recommend options on how these areas could be preserved.

FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION

The second bill I am introducing is the Colorado Forest Restoration and Fire Reduction Act. This bill complements the roadless-area protection bill by addressing some of the most pressing forest issues in other areas—the parts of Colorado's forests that adjoin urban development and that are at greatest risk for intense fires that can despoil watersheds and destroy homes.

As the news headlines continue to report, wildfires on national forests and other forested lands are a serious problem this summer—especially in Colorado. Right now, a major fire is still burning at the Mesa Verde National Park, another fire threatens the watershed of Glenwood Springs, and people are trying to recover from earlier fires that destroyed homes in areas of the Front Range.

Part of the problem results from hot, dry weather. But there are other, contributing factors. For many years, the Forest Service had a policy of trying to suppress nearly every fire, even though fire is an inescapable part of the ecology of western forests like those in Colorado. Today, in many parts of the forests there is an accumulation of underbrush and small diameter trees that is greater than would be the case if there had been more, smaller fires over the years. They provide the extra fuel that can turn a small fire into an intense inferno. Add to that our growing population and increasing development in the places where communities meet the forests—the so-called "urban interface"—and you have a recipe for worse problems ahead.

Properties, lives, and wildlife habitat are at risk, and so is the environment. Uncontrolled wildfires strip the land of its protective vegetative cover, making it highly susceptible to erosion. We have seen what that means in places like Buffalo Creek, where the eventual rain storms wash sediment and forest material into waterways, polluting and clogging sources of drinking water. In addition, wildfires also have serious adverse effects on the quality of the air.

Working with state and local partners, including our state forest service, the U.S. Forest Service has identified the interface areas at greatest risk of fire—the areas they call the "red zone." My second bill deals just with those areas.

Red zone areas in Colorado are situated in regions that contain complex land ownership patterns—frequently involving federal, state, Tribal, county, private and city lands. Those patterns make it difficult for any one agency to deal with the problem and so makes the problem that more intense. My bill would address these problems by establishing a program to share costs and provide incentives for collabora-

tive efforts at forest restoration and fire-prevention projects in the red zone.

The bill calls on the Forest Service to work with state and local agencies, independent scientists, and stakeholder groups to identify priorities and develop projects for forest restoration and fire prevention. The bill spells out clear and sound requirements that such projects would have to meet to be eligible for funding—including preservation of old trees and trees larger than 12" in diameter. It also specifies that preservation of roadless areas would be required, and that all projects would have to meet the requirements of all federal and state environmental laws.

To help assure the integrity of the program, the bill would require establishment of a technical advisory panel, including independent scientists as well as representatives of relevant agencies and stakeholder groups, to provide additional guidelines and set priorities. It would also require that the projects authorized under the bill be monitored and evaluated for their benefits and any potential adverse impacts to make sure the program is working as intended. The bill also authorizes funding to provide the federal share of the costs of the projects developed and implemented under the program.

Ultimately, the objective of this bill is to develop new collaborative relationships between the Forest Service and state, local and private forest experts and landowners—together with the public—to get out on the land and address problems before they become uncontrollable. The theory of this bill is that it is cheaper and more effective to prevent fires than to fight them. Reducing fire risks and restoring natural balance on our forested lands can help us accomplish that goal.

Mr. Speaker, these bills were not written overnight and they do not reflect just my own ideas. In developing them, I have drawn upon the technical expertise of federal and state agencies and have consulted with members of the Colorado conservation community as well as with other Coloradans who are familiar with the resources, values, and problems of our forests. I think these bills are sound, balanced measures that can help address some of the most pressing of those problems. I look forward to working with other Members of the Colorado delegation and the Congress as a whole to achieve the important goals of this legislation.

NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, we've had a busy agenda this week. But one important bill has been missing—the bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, or "VAWA." The House should take it up without delay.

VAWA is very important for Colorado. Through last year, our state received almost \$15 million in VAWA grants. That money has helped assist victims of domestic violence, but it has also done much more.

In fact, according to a letter from our Attorney General, Ken Salazar, and his colleagues

from other states, VAWA "has enabled us to maximize the effectiveness of our state programs that have made a critical difference in the lives of women and children endangered by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking." The current authorization for VAWA expires this year. Because I know the importance of renewing and strengthening this vital measure, I have joined in cosponsoring H.R. 1248, the VAWA reauthorization bill. I was encouraged when the Judiciary Committee approved it for consideration by the full House. But that happened on June 27th—a full month ago—and still the bill has not reached the floor, even though many less important measures have been considered.

I call on the leadership of both parties to bring the VAWA reauthorization bill to the floor without further delay. This is too important a matter to neglect.

A TRIBUTE TO CARY J. BRAIRTON

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I celebrate the 50th Birthday of Cary J. Brairton of Pittsford, NY.

Mr. Brairton was born on August 19 to his father and mother, James and Arax Brairton in Rochester, NY and has been living in the Rochester-area for all of his 50 years. His father was a member of the Rochester City Council and owner of a small business in the heart of downtown Rochester. Mr. Brairton graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1972. He has been an employee of the Eber Brothers Corporation for 27 years.

Mr. Brairton has been an active member in the community and to youth development. He has come to the aid of many youth athletic teams to ensure the kids would have the opportunity to play little league baseball, football or soccer by becoming a coach, volunteer or referee when no one else would agree to do so.

But his biggest achievement has been his devoted love to his two sons, Michael and Scott. Mr. Brairton lost his father in 1963 and grew up much of his life without the benefit of a paternal influence. For this reason, he has been a loving father and role model to his sons. Mr. Brairton's greatest accomplishment has been his overwhelming commitment to encourage and support his children in whatever activities they chose to participate in, whether it was sports, musicals, or other activities. He almost never missed one of his children's activities, even when his older son was playing lacrosse in college six hours away or when his youngest was participating in soccer tournaments all along the eastern shore.

Mr. Brairton will also be celebrating his 28th Wedding Anniversary on August 19. Mr. and Mrs. Brairton met while they were students at Eastridge High in Irondequoit, NY in 1967. The couple weathered the strains of a long distance relationship as Mr. Brairton attended 2 years at Heidelberg College in Ohio while Mrs. Brairton enrolled at Buffalo State. Hundreds of weekend visits to his wife-to-be allowed their love to flourish and in 1972, the

two were wed at Saint James Church in Rochester, NY.

Cary J. Brairton has been a committed father demonstrating great family values and deserves the congratulations of this Congress on his 50th Birthday and the anniversary of his 28 years as a dedicated husband.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK STAMP ACT JULY 27, 2000

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, in this new century, an education is more important to Americans than ever before in our nation's history. We have progressed from the agricultural-based economy of our forefathers to one that is knowledge-based and dependent on information and communications technology.

Today, in order to succeed and even just to function in this new economy, Americans must have a solid education and foundation of skills. In addition, Americans must be equipped with the skills necessary to continue learning. They must be prepared to survive in a world of rapid social and technological change.

Literacy is the primary tool needed for lifelong learning. It opens up doors to new opportunities and experiences.

Yet, today, too many Americans are unable to read a single sentence. In fact, nearly 40 percent of our nation's children cannot read at grade-level by the end of the third grade. In disadvantaged communities, this failure rate is a shocking 60 percent. Without the basic skill of literacy, these children are likely to fall to the wayside in our new economy.

We must combat illiteracy. However, we cannot wait until these children start school; we must reach them earlier. We should eagerly seek to give these children the excitement, the satisfaction, the empowerment, and the impetus for growth that comes from reading.

Studies have confirmed that reading to young children in the years before age 5 has a profound effect on their ability to learn. Doctors have told us that a child's brain needs intellectual stimulation to grow to its full potential, so we must read to our children from birth through school age. But many families do not have access to children's books. A recent study found that 60 percent of kindergarten children who performed poorly in school did not own a single book.

The Book Stamp Act, which I am introducing today along with my colleagues Mr. UPTON, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. MILLER, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO, and which was recently introduced in the Senate by Senators KENNEDY and HUTCHISON, will help provide children with their own books before they enter school.

The act authorizes an appropriation of \$50 million a year for this purpose. It also creates a special postage stamp, which will feature an early learning character and which will sell at a slightly higher rate than the normal 33 cents, to create additional revenues for the Book Stamp Program.

The resources will be distributed through the Child Care and Development Block Grant to

the state child care agency in each state. The state agency then will allocate its funds to local child care research and referral agencies throughout the state on the basis of local need.

These non-profit agencies will work with established book distribution programs such as First Book, Reading is Fundamental, and Reach Out and Read to coordinate the buying of discounted books and the distribution of the books to children.

However, since these young children cannot read on their own. These agencies will also work with parents and child care providers to educate them on the best ways to read to children and the most effective use of books with children at various stages of development.

Illiteracy is a serious problem. For our Nation to continue to thrive in this new century, we must ensure that all children have the ability to read and learn. The Book Stamp Act will help achieve this goal.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

HONORING LOUIS' LUNCH ON ITS 105TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to celebrate the 105th anniversary of a true New Haven landmark: Louis' Lunch. Recently the Lassen family celebrated this landmark as well as the 100th anniversary of their claim to fame—the invention and commercial serving of one of America's favorites, the hamburger.

A hundred years ago, Louis Lassen, founder of Louis' Lunch, ran a small lunch wagon selling steak sandwiches to local factory workers. A frugal business man, Louis did not like to waste the excess beef from his daily lunch rush. So, he ground up the excess, grilled it, and served it between two slices of bread—without ketchup. With a meat grinder and a streak of that infamous Yankee ingenuity, Louis changed the course of American culinary history, serving America's first hamburger. This is the story that each faithful patron will hear when they visit the small Crown Street luncheonette still owned and operated by the third and fourth generations of the Lassen family. Hamburgers are still the specialty of the house where steak is ground fresh each day and hand molded, still slow cooked on the same turn-of-the-century gas grills, broiled vertically, and served between two slices of toast with your choice of three acceptable garnish: cheese, tomato, and onion. Requests for ketchup or mustard are briskly declined. This is the home of the greatest hamburger in the world—a claim that is not easily contested—perhaps best known for allowing their customers to have a burger their way or not at all.

More than just another diner, Louis' Lunch has held a special place in the hearts of the residents of New Haven for more than a century. Thousands turned out in the 1960s and 1970s when the city announced plans to raze Louis' to make room for a new high rise building—testimony to its immeasurable popularity and special place in our City's history. After