1998. It is for me a great honor to pay tribute to TAK Construction, and to its President, Mr. Desai, a resident of Livingston, NJ.

Last December, TAK Construction, Inc., celebrated its 10th anniversary. Mr. Desai is the driving force behind the company's success. He is a graduate of the M.S. University of Baroda, India, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering. More recently, he earned his Masters Degree in Civil Engineering from Stevens institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ. Prior to founding TAK in 1987, Mr. Desai was a project manager with a large construction company through which he achieved a broad background in various phases of the construction industry. During the past ten and one-half years, TAK has completed more than 150 projects valued at more than $100 million. The company has demonstrated steady annual growth, taking great pride in its commitment to using new materials, practices and innovation, and working to stay on-time and on-budget.

Kenny Desai clearly takes very seriously the company's slogan of ''Building for the 21st Century.'' Despite his significant investment of time in his business, Mr. Desai still manages to find time for a wide range of professional and community affiliations. He is a partner in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Regional Alliance, and a Member of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, as well as local Chambers. He serves as Secretary of the Rotary Club International and is an Honorary Special Deputy Sheriff of Hudson County, NJ. Deeply devoted to his Indian heritage, Mr. Desai is Director and a founding member of the Indo-American Cultural Society of North America, a Trustee of ''VRAJ'' Religion Institute and Gandhi Mandir, and founding member of Kapol Samaj of North America and Vice President of Vegetarian Vision Inc.

Kenny Desai is a true American success story. As a minority business owner, he has had to overcome significant obstacles on his path to success. In so doing, he stands out as a fine role model for our young people. I wish him and the employees of TAK Construction continued success, and congratulate Mr. Desai on this richly deserved honor.

''DECLINE OF THE ASPEN''

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, if chaos befalls the Forest Service, and politicians don't care to hear, should Westerners persist in making noise? With apologies to Bishop Berkeley, the answer is a resounding ''yes!'' That is, at least according to Colorado's Club 20. Celebrating its 45th anniversary, Club 20 is an organization of counties, communities, businesses, conservationists, individuals, and associations cast throughout Colorado's 20 western counties. The group was created by Wester Slope business leaders to speak out on issues affecting rural economies and life in Colorado's mountain regions.

The U.S. Forest Service's performance is the subject of a just-released special report, produced by Club 20's Research Foundation. The missive is a must-read for anyone seriously concerned about maintaining a vibrant forest system and healthy environment in the Rocky Mountain West.

The report should also serve as a bright wake-up call to forestry professionals and lawmakers, but most of all to Forest Service higher-ups in Washington, DC.

Entitled ''Decline of the Aspen,'' the report documents the jeopardy Colorado's forests face due to years of mismanagement by the U.S. Forest Service. Citing the serious shortage of accurate scientific data on issues that affect the West, the foundation points out how the Forest Service has strayed from managing for multiple use and sustained yield.

One casualty of poor management is Colorado's aspen inventory. Aspen stands have declined at an alarming rate, causing researchers to predict most of Colorado's aspen trees will disappear within the next 40 to 50 years.

Maintaining and restoring aspen is of paramount importance to Colorado. Not only do the trees help entice $6 billion worth of tourists each year, but aspen communities sustain tremendously high biodiversity covering thousands of acres across the Wester Slope.

The aspen, however, are just one indication of the harmful effect of poor planning and misdirected leadership within the Forest Service. In turning away from its ''land-of-many-uses'' philosophy, the Forest Service has engaged a policy of declining resources uses. Such a policy threatens the health of our public lands and the vitality of our western communities.

There has been an unprecedented increase in the annual net growth of national forests since the turn of the century. According to the report, without responsible harvesting, thinning or prescribed burns, timber inventory accumulates to the point where healthy growth is impeded, and stands become susceptible to wildfires, beetle infestations and disease.

The Club 20 report concludes that the Forest Service has suffered from a lack of direction, if not a lack of a clear mission. Political pressure, rather than science-based objectives for healthy, diverse forests, often motivates management decisions or at best favors poor ones by default.

Congress would do well to consider the findings of Club 20. Recent hearings by the House Resources Committee have focused on the appalling performance and financial audits of the Forest Service by the General Accounting Office (GAO). Club 20 clearly spells out how the GAO-exposed Forest Service deficiencies at the national level are directly threatening life in the West for communities and ecosystems.

Though long on criticism of federal agents, Club 20's report is replete with constructive proposals and thoughtful solutions. The work thoroughly documents the need for an open budget process, private timber management strategies, sound fire policies, professional staffing, and aggressive state leadership in getting federal forest management back on track.

Moreover, Club 20 correctly asserts the federal government's moral obligation as steward to vast public landscapes. ''Federal ownership should imply federal responsibility to proper management.''

Indeed, with 75 percent of Western Colorado under federal ownership, mismanagement is intolerable to the people of the region whose livelihood and quality of life depend upon these public resources. From a forest health perspective, the environment and the economy are inextricably linked.

Club 20 should be commended for its balanced analysis, and for extending its hand of leadership and partnership in restoring the health of Western forests. In fact, the very future of the Forest Service may well be defined by its ability to accept the offer and thereby resume its historic mission of managing the forests for the benefit of forests, and for us all.

HONORING AUBREY AND SYLVIA FARB ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Aubrey and Sylvia Farb of Houston, Texas, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary on May 26, 1998. Throughout their lives, Aubrey and Sylvia have provided tremendous examples of public service, contributing unselfishly to numerous causes while raising a fine family.

Originally from Galveston, Aubrey Farb moved to Houston to attend The Rice Institute, known today as Rice University. Because of his academic record, he was selected during the war to attend Japanese language school and become a Japanese interrogation officer. When he returned, he obtained his Master's degree from Columbia University.

Sylvia Farb attended The University of Texas at Austin and graduated shortly before moving back to Houston. In July 1947, Aubrey and Sylvia were invited by mutual friends to play bridge, a hobby they both enjoy. In Aubrey's words, ''they have been playing bridge ever since.'' In fact, they play weekly and have become Grandmasters.

In May 1948, Aubrey and Sylvia were married in Houston, where they have lived during their entire 50 years of marriage. Aubrey worked as a CPA and Sylvia was a stay-at-home mother; both also volunteered their time to help others. The Farbs have been active in politics, the arts, and with the homeless. Their contributions to the community are many. Additionally, they started the Aubrey and Sylvia Community Service Fund at Congregation Emanu El to help with the synagogue's charitable projects.

Over the years, Aubrey and Sylvia have instilled their values and generosity in their children and grandchildren. The Farbs have four daughters, Helene, Roberta, Susan, and Loretta and three ''sons by choice'', Robert Scolnick, Douglas Colton, and David Morris, and six grandchildren—Leslie Scolnick and her husband Marc, Jonathan Scolnick, Evan and Julia Colton, and Hannah and Shara Morris.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Aubrey and Sylvia Farb on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary and commend them on a lifetime of achievement. Their commitment not only to one another, but to others as well, is an example for all of us. May the coming years bring good health, happiness, and time to enjoy their children and grandchildren. On this joyous occasion, I am pleased to join their family, friends, and community in saying congratulations and thank you.