



## New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources

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Red Mountain Cut Foundation  
ATTN: Mary Jane Webb  
5724 Highway 280 East  
Birmingham, AL 35242

Dear Foundation members,

I write in endorsement of the Foundation's efforts to restore, provide access to, and maintain the walkway at the Red Mountain Expressway Roadcut along Highway 31/280 in Birmingham, Alabama. I am a working geologist, Earth science educator, and native son of Birmingham now living in New Mexico. My educational and career choices were influenced by the Red Mountain Museum and visits to the Red Mountain Roadcut walkway in the 1980s and 1990s. As a child, the site offered me access to a world I never knew: the fossil remains of ocean organisms, the seams of iron ore to which Birmingham owes its existence, faults and folds from tectonic movements that were unimaginable to my young mind, and layers upon layers of rocks deposited in seas that had long since vanished. The roadcut gave me my first introduction to foundational geologic principles such as superposition, plate tectonics, and deep time. Having it open and accessible in the future ensures that its potential can continue to influence young minds for generations to come.

The Red Mountain Roadcut is a world-class exposure of early Paleozoic stratigraphy, paleontology, and economic geology. It perfectly fits the definition of a geoheritage site: "locales that play a key role in developing our understanding of the history of Earth." In addition, the roadcut is perfectly suited to use as an outdoor classroom to enhance public enjoyment while promoting the connection between people and our reliance on geological features. Its location within Birmingham makes it especially important for preservation and access – not many cities have such incredible geologic exposures within their boundaries!

I fully support the efforts of the Red Mountain Cut Foundation in restoring access to and maintaining the Red Mountain Expressway Roadcut. Its degradation over the past three decades has been a detriment to Earth science education and outreach not just in Birmingham, but across the southeast (I hacked through kudzu and poison ivy to reach the site on an Economic Geology class field trip in 2005 while I was a college student in Tennessee). Restoring it to its former state of accessibility, along with modern improvements in signage and interpretation, will prove advantageous to the city, to teachers across all levels in the region, and to the geological knowledge of the nation.

With warm regards and appreciation for your efforts,

Kevin Hobbs, Ph.D.  
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