



Mr. Bryson Stephens  
Chairman of Board of Directors  
EBSCO Industries, Inc.  
5724 Highway 280 East  
Birmingham, AL 35242

January 25, 2023

Dear Bryson,

I am writing in support of the proposed Red Mountain Cut Project in Birmingham Alabama.

As you know, there exists a shortage of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workers in the United States. This limits our economic development and competitiveness in the global economy. Scientific literacy amongst Americans is lower than in other developed countries, leading to a multitude of issues. We also suffer from a lack of women and minorities pursuing degrees in the STEM fields, a troubling and persistent trend that prevents our nation from fully actualizing our diverse population. Not surprisingly, there is also a dearth of opportunities for Americans to explore and experience the natural world in accessible settings near metropolitan areas.

Your proposed project will create a unique and special geological landmark that will no doubt affect generations of young learners while also bolstering the region's recreational value. Rocks tell stories; Red Mountain has a nearly 200-million year tale of our planet's history waiting to be told. I envision this trail serving K-16 students and teachers, geoscience professionals from the energy industry and other fields, research scientists from universities across the country, tourists, lifelong learners, and local residents who appreciate and value the simple beauty of nature.

Why do I care about this project? My organization was founded in 1993 to preserve a former quarry located in Hamburg, New York. In 1995, the Town of Hamburg purchased a substantial part of the former quarry and deeded it to us under conditions which included cleaning out decades of illegally dumped garbage and keeping the facility open for science education and fossil collecting. Today, the park is ranked #1 in the country and attracts thousands of visitors from across the world every year.

We would not exist without the same vision that compels you and your colleagues to preserve the distinctive geological treasure of Red Mountain. I wish you the best.

Sincerely,

Philip J. Stokes

Executive Director  
Hamburg Natural History Society/Penn Dixie