



February 21, 2005,

Robert D. Hatcher, Jr.
UT Distinguished Scientist and Professor
Tectonics and Structural Geology
Science Alliance Center of Excellence
Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences
306 Earth and Planetary Sciences Building
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-1410

Dear Dr. Hatcher,

I am writing this letter in enthusiastic support of your proposal to the National Science Foundation for a DUSEL S2 study of the Kimballton Mine site. I was very impressed with the scientific possibilities when I visited the site in November. In addition to the obvious competency of the rock, which would facilitate the construction of large cavities for physics instruments, the Kimballton site offers excellent possibilities for geological and geomicrobiological investigations.

As a geomicrobiologists, I am excited about the prospect of analyzing deep sedimentary rock samples from Kimbalton as part of your S2 research. Specifically, I would like to quantify the biomass and metabolic activities of microbes in these sedimentary rock habitats and I would like to apply molecular approaches to characterizing the microbial community structure. I look forward to collaborating with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Kieft
Professor