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**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PLANNED AT
FERNALD**

06/01/93

DOE-FN/PUBLIC

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 1, 1993

DOE NEWS

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PLANNED AT FERNALD

CINCINNATI, Ohio -- A University of Cincinnati professor will be recruiting key stakeholders and other interested parties for a citizens advisory committee to help guide cleanup at the U. S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Fernald Site.

Dr. Eula Bingham, a professor of environmental health in the College of Medicine and director of Ohio Hazardous Substances Research, Education, and Management Institute at the University of Cincinnati, will serve as the convener for the advisory committee. She was a volunteer investigator for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and has served on local, national, and international committees dealing with environmental and public health issues.

Dr. Bingham also has received the Rockefeller Foundation Public Service Award. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

"Creation of a local citizens advisory committee is a critical step in ensuring that the democratic principles envisioned early in the history of our republic are brought to bear on the intractable problem of nuclear waste," Dr. Bingham said. "Concerned citizens will be called upon to guide the events and decisions that will affect the lives of current and future generations."

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The Fernald Advisory Committee is being formed by collaboration among U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (U. S. EPA), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and DOE. DOE will provide administrative support for the committee. As convener, Dr. Bingham will develop a specific charter and list of recommended participants through meetings with interested parties.

The objective of forming the advisory committee is to seek consensus among stakeholders in solutions and future courses of action at Fernald. The advisory committee will advise U. S. EPA, Ohio OEPA and DOE on environmental restoration issues at the site. Each agency has agreed to consider the advisory committees recommendations in its decision-making process. However, the advisory committee will not replace the regulatory process, nor are its recommendations legally binding on U. S. EPA, Ohio EPA and DOE. Some of the major issues that concern the agencies are:

- What should be the future use of the site?
- Determination of cleanup levels (How clean is clean?)
- Where should radioactive and hazardous waste be disposed that is generated as a result of restoration activities.
- Cleanup priorities.

The committee, which is expected to have 10 to 15 members, will represent the major stakeholders for the Fernald site. Potential stakeholders include environmentalists, labor representatives, local governmental officials, various community groups, and residents near the site.

Dr. Bingham will be meeting with stakeholders this summer to discuss the advisory committee and its objectives. There also will be briefings and a public meeting to solicit public input into the creation of the Fernald Advisory Committee.

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The Fernald facility produced high-purity uranium products for use in U. S. defense programs from 1953 until 1989, when production was halted. The Fernald Environmental Restoration Management Corporation (FERMCO) is now managing the cleanup under a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) agreement between DOE and the U. S. EPA. This effort is part of the DOE's plan to restore the environment at its facilities nationwide.

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