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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ECO-TERRORIST GETS NINE YEARS

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan – Frank Brian Ambrose, 33, of Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Judge Paul L. Maloney to serve nine years in Federal prison for his role in the December 31, 1999, arson of Agriculture Hall on Michigan State University's main campus in East Lansing, Michigan, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced. Ambrose, who committed the arson on behalf of the radical environmental group known as the "Earth Liberation Front" or "ELF," was also ordered to pay over \$3 million in restitution to MSU and to victims of other similar acts of arson in Eastern Michigan and Southern Indiana that he participated in between 1999 and 2003. Finally, Judge Maloney ordered that Ambrose remain on Supervised Release for life after he is released by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

In targeting Agriculture Hall, Ambrose and his criminal associates had sought to destroy or disrupt federally-funded research that was being conducted into genetic modification of crops for the purpose of feeding Third World populations. At the time of the arson, MSU researchers had received approximately \$20 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (US AID). In the view of the ELF, such genetic modification was harmful to the natural environment.

In imposing the sentence, Judge Maloney quoted from a letter by Michael Kiley of the MSU General Counsel's office, noting that "When people come onto MSU's open campus, under cover of dark, to destroy and to put untold numbers of people at risk, the resulting harm is inflicted on the entire academic community. The affront is profound in nature, and the impact is truly severe, both for the institution and for the whole academic enterprise."

Before adjudging sentence, Judge Maloney granted a motion by the U.S. Attorney's Office to reduce Ambrose's sentence from a possible high of 20 years in recognition of his substantial assistance to the FBI in the investigation of the MSU arson and numerous other ELF attacks in Indiana and Michigan. The Justice Department has also agreed not to prosecute Ambrose for those other acts.

In addition to Ambrose, three other defendants have been convicted on charges related to the MSU arson. Chief among these is Marie Mason, who will appear before Chief Judge Maloney for sentencing on February 5, 2009, at the U.S. District Court in Lansing, Michigan.

The case was investigated by the FBI; the MSU Police Department; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). The case is being prosecuted for the United States by Assistant U.S. Attorney Hagen W. Frank.

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