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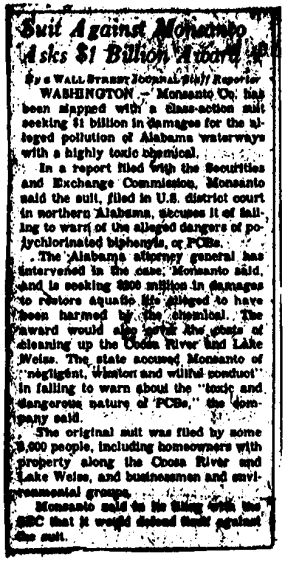

Suit Against Monsanto Asks $1 Billion Award

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Monsanto Co. has been slapped with a class-action suit seeking $1 billion in damages for the alleged pollution of Alabama waterways with a highly toxic chemical.

In a report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Monsanto said the suit, filed in U.S. district court in northern Alabama, accuses it of failing to warn of the alleged dangers of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

The Alabama attorney general has intervened in the case, Monsanto said, and is seeking $300 million in damages to restore aquatic life alleged to have been harmed by the chemical. The award would also cover the costs of cleaning up the Coosa River and Lake Weiss. The state accused Monsanto of "negligent, wanton and willful conduct" in failing to warn about the "toxic and dangerous nature of PCBs," the company said.

The original suit was filed by some 3,000 people, including homeowners with property along the Coosa River and Lake Weiss, and businessmen and environmental groups.

Monsanto said in its filing with the SEC that it would defend itself against the suit.