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OMC's counterattack

IT IS JUST a lawsuit, but Jack London fans might easily picture the dispute it describes in terms of a small but determined wildcat turning in mid-chase on two mighty bears hot on its heels.

The lawsuit, as you may have guessed, is the one announced Thursday by the harried Outboard Marine Corp. against two relentless pursuers, the U.S. and Illinois Environmental Protection Agencies. The two agencies want OMC to clean up PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) pollutants deposited over a period from the early 1940s. But now OMC is demanding in the courts that the two agencies help it with the job.

The company's demand is based on what it contends are legal requirements imposed on the agencies by Congress, par-

ticularly for environmental problems that originated before 1972. It wants the agencies to tell it what must be done and how to do it and it may ask later on that they help with what appears to be a costly undertaking ahead.

As most News-Sun readers are aware, the PCBs drained into the Waukegan harbor and settled deep into the ooze at the bottom without any awareness by OMC that they were present in oil it used to lubricate machines that operate under extremely high temperatures.

OBVIOUSLY, it is far too early to tell how the battle will end but at least for the moment, the pursuers find themselves confronted by a scrappy little fighter that is tired of running in circles.