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\$20 million in fines asked for pollution

By Lee Strobel

MAXIMUM FINES of \$20 million against Eastman Kodak Co. of Washington were sought Friday in a pollution suit filed in federal District Court by the U.S. attorney's office.

The suit charges that the Johnson Outboard Motor Division of the corporation discharged two million pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) into Washington Harbor and Lake Michigan over a period of 18 years.

PCB is an insecticide-like chemical considered hazardous to public health and aquatic life.

The firm's "discharge of PCB has led to the accumulation of PCB in the bottom sediments of Washington Harbor, Lake Michigan, and their tributaries at such greatly concentrated levels as to represent a serious threat to drinking water, aquatic life, and other uses of these waters," the suit contends.

THE COMPANY is charged with discharging PCB-laden hydraulic fluids from its lake-side facility from 1960 to 1972. Though the actual discharge has ended, the suit said sediments in the Washington Harbor bottom are "extremely contaminated," with PCB, picking up as much as 25 per cent of these sediments.

These sediments continue to cause pollution problems, the suit says, and heavy rains will cause PCB to flow into Lake Michigan because of the contamination.

The suit seeks an order requiring the firm to dredge and dispose of contaminated sediments in Washington Harbor and a nearby ditch. It also seeks penalties of \$10,000 a day since Oct. 16, 1972, for pollution violations.

Earlier this month, the firm filed suit in federal District Court charging the federal and state Environmental Protection Agencies with part of the responsibility for dealing with toxic PCB dumping into Lake Michigan at the Washington plant. The firm said it has spent \$2 million to halt the discharge of PCB into the lake and is willing to pay "our fair share" of ending remaining problems.