SEP 21 1976

GE Target Of Suit

ATLANTA (UPI) — A group of Georgia and Alabama residents have filed a $500 million lawsuit against the General Electric Co., charging the firm "recklessly" caused PCB pollution of the Coosa River.

The class action suit filed Monday on behalf of river property owners, businesses and fishermen charges GE "willfully, wantonly, negligently or recklessly allowed and caused PCB to be released into a stream that leads directly into the Coosa River."

The suit also named the Monsanto Co. as a defendant because the firm sold the pollutant to GE.

Georgia officials two weeks ago halted commercial fishing in the Coosa after high levels of PCBs — polychlorinated biphenyls — were found in fish caught there. The ban later was extended to two northwest Georgia tributaries of the river.

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Suit Accuses 2 Firms Of Contaminating River

ATLANTA (AP) — Businessmen, property owners and fishermen have filed a $500 million lawsuit against General Electric Co. and the Monsanto Co., charging that they polluted the Coosa River.

The class action suit, filed in U.S. District Court here Monday, charges General Electric with poisoning fish by dumping polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into a tributary of the river.

Monsanto Co. sold the chemical to General Electric, the suit says.

Two weeks ago state officials ordered a halt to commercial fishing in the river because the fish contained levels of PCBs above the limit recommended for human consumption by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

A spokesman for General Electric denied that the firm was responsible for the fish contamination. W.R. Buchanan, manager of employe and community relations, said that because General Electric still uses PCBs, it is a "natural target for anyone" who wants to file suit.

The use of PCBs has been restricted in recent years, but "until 1972, there were any number of uses of PCB," Buchanan said. "It was used in lubricating oil that might have been disposed of and ultimately found its way into the water system."

William C. Lanham, an Atlanta attorney representing the plaintiffs who are from both Georgia and Alabama, said he will attempt to prove that *Monsanto did not fully inform* General Electric of the dangers of PCB.

PCBs are used in the manufacture of electronic components and can cause skin eruptions, excessive eye discharges and swelling of eyelids.

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Firms sued after river is polluted

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