56-52A AIR/WATER POLLUTION
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ALABAMA JOINS $1-BILLION CLASS ACTION SUIT AGAINST GENERAL ELECTRIC, MONSANTO ON PCBs

State of Alabama has intervened in a $1-billion class action suit against General Electric Co. and Monsanto Co., asking that the firms be assessed an additional $100.1-million to restore aquatic life in the Coosa River and Lake Weiss damaged by alleged polychlorinated biphenyl discharges from a GE facility at Rome, Ga. Original class action suit was filed last December in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama by homeowners along the waterways, businessmen and environmental groups.

Monsanto was cited as a codefendant on the grounds that the manufacturer of PCBs failed to provide public notice of the dangers involved in the chemical's use. Alabama accused Monsanto of "negligent, wanton and willful conduct" in failing to issue warnings about the toxic nature of PCBs. Monsanto, in a report on the suit to Securities and Exchange Commission, said it will "vigorously" defend itself against the charges.

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