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Firm sued on PCB runoff

By Dolores McCahill

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A suit accusing Outboard Marine Corp. of Waukegan of allowing runoffs of harmful chemicals into Lake Michigan and Waukegan Harbor was filed Thursday by Illinois Atty. Gen. William J. Scott.

In the suit filed in U.S. District Court, Scott charged the company allowed continued discharges of large quantities of PCBs into the lake and harbor and tributary of the harbor called the North Ditch.

SCOTT SAID the company stopped using PCB in 1973 after a federal report called the chemical dangerous to fish and to humans. However, the chemical has continued to be discharged into the harbor, Scott said, because drainage from company land carried PCB.

The high accumulation of PCB on company land and in the 11 drainage outflow stems from the company's use of PCB since

the 1950s.

Scott asked the court to impose fines under federal and state anti-pollution laws. Federal law would impose a \$10,000 fine for the violation, and a \$10,000-a-day fine for each day of continued violation. State law would impose a \$10,000 fine for the violation and a \$1,000 a fine for each day of continued violation.

SCOTT ALSO asked for a court-supervised study, to be paid by Outboard Marine, of techniques to remove PCBs that have accumulated on company property and in the harbor. He also asked for the court to order the company to remove the accumulation and dispose of it safely.

Scott said PCB levels in Lake Michigan have been so high that trout, salmon and other fish in the lake have been made unfit for human consumption.

"People have a fundamental human right to eat uncontaminated fish," Scott said.