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EPA sues 16 to enforce waste laws

strict Court in Cincinnati against those companies that refused to take part in the negotiations. Among the defendants are Monsanto, B.F. Goodrich, Shell Oil, Georgia-Pacific and Phillips Petroleum.

Officials at EPA and the Justice Department, whose enforcement record under the 1980 Superfund law has been criticized as lackluster by members of Congress and environmental groups, described the action on the Chem-Dyne site as a model for handling such clean-up problems.

A Justice Department official

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration Thursday sued 16 major firms and the owners of a hazardous-waste dump in Hamilton, Ohio, in what officials called the administration's strongest action yet to enforce toxic-waste laws.

The lawsuit came after the government had reached a \$2.4 million settlement with more than 100 other companies that used the 10-acre Chem-Dyne Corp. dump in downtown Hamilton to store hundreds of thousands of gallons of chemical and industrial wastes, in-

said it was the first suit the administration has filed under the Superfund law, which set up a \$1.6 billion industry-government financed fund to clean up hazardous waste sites around the country. Several earlier suits have been amended to add Superfund claims and defendants.

Michael Brown, enforcement counsel at EPA who supervised the negotiations, said he feels Thursday's action will "help stop resistance to future agreements. Hopefully, it will lead to a pattern of negotiations, and assurances that if companies don't come on board we will take legal action."

cluding arsenic and PCBs.

Environmental Protection Agency chief Anne M. Gorsuch said the settlement is the largest voluntary waste cleanup commitment by industry so far. In a statement, she called the number of companies participating "dramatic evidence of a new trend. We believe this is being engendered by EPA's approach of a willingness to negotiate, backed with a strong enforcement commitment."

The suit, alleging violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the so-called Superfund law, was filed in U.S. Dis-

Dave Linnett of the Environmental Defense Fund called the suit "a good sign," but added, "The fact that the administration has filed a Superfund case shouldn't be a cause for celebration. We've had to lower expectations because the (enforcement) performance has been so bad for the past 18 months."

The suit said the Chem-Dyne facility contains 11,500, 55-gallon drums of chemical wastes, including PCBs, vinyl chloride and arsenic. It is located near the water treatment plant for Hamilton, a city of 85,000, as well as near a hospital and several ball fields.