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BURRIS NEGOTIATES SETTLEMENT TO END NINE-YEAR-OLD MONSANTO LAWSUIT; MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN DEAD CREEK PROJECT

SPRINGFIELD, October XX, 1991 -- Illinois Attorney General Roland W. Burris has reached an agreement to end a nine-year-old lawsuit against the Monsanto Company, clearing the way for cleanup to begin on a heavily-contaminated tract of land along the Mississippi River in St. Clair County. The Monsanto case is one of the largest in a series of actions undertaken by the Attorney General's Office to clean up the area around Sauget now commonly referred to as Dead Creek, one of the most polluted sites in Illinois.

"This settlement represents the first step in what is likely to be a multi-million-dollar cleanup effort by Monsanto," Burris said. "It is a necessary first step if we are to finally remove the hazards posed by decades of mishandled wastes, if we are to finally begin reclaiming Dead Creek for future generations."

The settlement, filed in St. Clair County Circuit Court, calls for Monsanto to undertake several major studies, examining both the harm caused to the environment from hazardous wastes dumped on the site since the late 1950s and the ways to prevent future harm from the presence of such wastes. Those studies will eventually lead to a plan for the remediation of hazards on the Monsanto site; such a plan will have to meet the approval of the Attorney General's Office and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

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contaminants from those wastes had been allowed to seep into the groundwater and directly into the Mississippi River.

The suit was the first in a series of actions undertaken by the state in what is now referred to as the "Dead Creek Project." The area had been home to vast amounts of industry since the turn of the century, and for decades companies routinely dumped their waste by-products into the creek or buried them in makeshift landfills in the area. Dead Creek is the name given to the area around Sauget contaminated by such practices.

Although the Monsanto case was the first to be filed, it is the second to be settled. Cerro Copper Products Company of Sauget entered into an agreement with the state in July 1990 to clean up its section of Dead Creek; that \$12 million project is virtually completed.

"Each settlement moves us closer to our goal of restoring the environmental balance to Dead Creek and Sauget, and for that Cerro Copper and now Monsanto are to be commended," Burris said. "But there is much more to be done. There are many other companies in the vicinity of Dead Creek that must face up to their responsibilities as these two companies have done. I would hope that they will do so quickly, so that our cleanup efforts can move quickly forward."

Burris said it is not yet possible to estimate how much the cleanup will ultimately cost Monsanto, although he did say it is likely to be in the millions of dollars. In addition to the studies and the actual cleanup, the company will also pay a total of \$150,000 to the state (\$143,000 to the Hazardous Waste Fund and \$7,000 to the Environmental Protection Fund) to cover response and oversight costs already incurred by the state. The company will also be responsible for future response and oversight costs incurred by the state during the implementation of the consent order.

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