SEP 22 1976

Of Coosa River

GE plant sued on pollution

ATLANTA (UPI) — A group of Georgia and Alabama residents has filed a $500 million lawsuit against the [redacted], 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 [redacted] 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.

A GE plant near Rome uses PCBs in the manufacture of electric transformers.

W.R. Buchanan, a plant official, said PCBs were used to make many products at the plant a few years ago.

"Until 1972, there were any number of uses of PCB. It was used in lubrication oil that might have been disposed of and ultimately found its way into the water system," he said.

He said since the firm still uses PCBs, it is a "natutal target" for lawsuits.

William C. Lanham, the Atlanta attorney representing the river residents, said since the fishing ban "the place is a ghost town all up and down the river."

He said some poor residents "literally depend on catching fish in the river just to eat."

The suit asks $500 million in damages to be distributed among as many as 1,000 people who may have been adversely affected by the pollution.

Lanham said he would attempt to prove Monsanto did not fully inform GE of the effects of PCBs.

ANDERSON, S. C.
INDEPENDENT
D. 52,000

SEP 22 1976

AGE ONE

PCB Pollution Of Coosa Draws $500 Million Suit

ATLANTA (AP) — A $500 million lawsuit has been filed against [redacted] Co. and the [redacted], charging the firms with polluting the Coosa River.

The class action suit, filed in U.S. District Court here Monday by businessmen, property owners and fishermen, charges General Electric with poisoning fish by dumping Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) into a tributary of the river.

The suit claims the Monsanto Co. sold the chemicals to General Electric.

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

PCBs are used in the manufacture of electronic components and can cause skin eruptions, excessive eye discharges and swelling of eyelids. A General Electric spokesman denied that the firm was responsible for fish contamination.

W. R. Buchanan, manager of employe and community relations, said because GE still uses PCBs, it is a "natural target for anyone" who wants to file suit

On another matter, state biologists said Monday thousands of fish have died in the state-operated Buford fish hatchery on the Chattahoochee River. Only four days earlier dead fish were discovered in Nancy Creek

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