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What's ahead for Fleet

The legal challenges still facing Fleet Finance after the Georgia Supreme Court dismissed a class-action lawsuit against the lender Monday:

Richmond County Superior Court - A class-action suit is pending against Fleet for violation of the Georgia Fair Housing Act and contends that Fleet has given a large number of loans to black residents, while charging rates well above the national average. The lawsuit is limited to blacks and has an estimated 2,600 to 2,800 families who are eligible, said Augusta lawyer Jack Long.

Cobb County Superior Court - A class-action suit against Fleet accuses the company of state racketeering and federal loansharking violations. Howard **Rothbloom**, who represents the plaintiffs, said his firm is reviewing about 1,400 potential cases against Fleet, which has issued an estimated 20,000 home-equity loans in Georgia.

State attorney general's office - In November, Attorney General Michael J. Bowers named former DeKalb District Attorney Bob Wilson to head the state's investigation of Fleet. Mr. Bowers said the investigation centers on possible violations of the Fair Business Practices Act.

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