

Cowper seeks to cut red tape

JUNEAU — Gov. Steve Cowper has directed state agencies to streamline their review of potential Alaska natural gas pipeline projects in an effort to reduce government red tape that could delay the projects.

In a recent administrative order, the governor requested affected state agencies to appoint one person in their departments to oversee the review of gas pipeline projects. A state pipeline officer will coordinate the activities of those "liaison officers."

"Although it may be a few years before North Slope gas is actually delivered to market, I want the state to do everything it can to ensure an efficient and speedy process," Cowper said. "An Alaska gas pipeline project would put Alaskans to work and provide a secure source of energy to the rest of the country."

The order designates the state

Department of Natural Resources as the lead agency in reviewing gas pipeline projects. Under Alaska law, the state must approve a right-of-way for any such gasoline project.

DNR's Fairbanks regional office will serve as the State Pipeline Officer, under the administrative order. Duties will include monitoring the preconstruction, construction, operation and close-out aspects of a gasoline project.

The order immediately affects the Trans-Alaska Gas System proposed by Yukon Pacific Corp., which would carry North Slope gas from Prudhoe Bay to tidewater in Alaska. State law requires companies to reimburse the state for the cost of regulating the gasoline project, and Yukon Pacific is already funding more than \$400,000 worth of positions in several state agencies.