

# Cowper stresses Alaska issues at western meeting

Gov. Steve Cowper is urging other western governors to press the federal government on two issues important to Alaska — clean-water legislation and the funding of federal highway programs.

At a two-day meeting of governors from western states in Phoenix, Ariz., Cowper urged his colleagues to call for congressional reauthorization of the Clean Water Act and the distribution of \$13 billion for highway and road improvements.

"Both these programs are important to Alaska and other western states, but both have received short-shrift by Congress and the Reagan administration," Cowper said. "Without them we could lose nearly \$15 million in federal highway money."

Congressional failure to reauthorize the federal aid highway program has prevented \$13 billion in a federal budget bill from being distributed to states including Alaska.

Even though states are not receiving such aid, the federal government continues to collect about \$40 million a day in taxes for dedicated highway improvements.

Western states stand to lose \$3 billion and 115,000 construction jobs if a bill is not enacted. Alaska has received about \$170 million in federal highway aid in recent years for con-

struction and improvement of its highways and road systems.

The Clean Water Act spells out a strict time-frame for cleaning up municipal wastewater. It also includes \$14.6 million in wastewater construction grants for Alaska communities.

The bill would also permit the Army Corp of Engineers and the federal Environmental Protection Agency to better coordinate the permitting of log transfer facilities in Alaska.

It also includes a provision that could allow Alaska to begin to take over the National Pollution Discharge Elimination permitting process, a move which could assist Alaska placer miners.

In early November, President Reagan killed the Clean Water Act with a pocket veto. Delays in funding could have detrimental effects in Alaska.

Cowper was one of a dozen western governors attending the meeting of the Western Governor's Association. Much of the conference focused on economic development in western states.

In addition, Cowper met with fellow governors to discuss Alaska issues, including international trade, development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and insurance problems.