

AVCP cards valid aboard Western fishing vessels

It is no longer a violation of state law for Western Alaska fishermen to use their fishing permits without a state or federal identification card.

Gov. Steve Cowper has authorized the Department of Public Safety to recognize identification cards issued by the Association of Village Council Presidents as valid aboard fishing vessels.

"With the fishing season about to get underway it's important that those individuals have the opportunity to earn their living while still conforming to state law," Cowper said.

State law requires someone holding a fishing permit to have at least one piece of identification issued by a state or federal agency with the permit holder's picture. Typically, that card is a driver's license.

Cowper plans on signing legislation allowing the public safety department to approve acceptance of identification cards issued by various organizations, according to the governor's office.

Cowper's authorization for use of AVCP cards is already in effect. He is expected to sign the legislation making AVCP card use permanent later this month.

"It's understandable that residents of small communities in Western Alaska might not have a driver's license," Cowper said.