

Governors urge more funding for fisheries

JUNEAU — Gov. Steve Cowper, along with Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and Washington Gov. Booth Gardner, has urged Congress to increase funding to manage federal fisheries in the Pacific Northwest.

In a letter initiated by Cowper to Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations, the governors say proposed budget cuts for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration would have a debilitating effect on fisheries management in the North Pacific.

They say that NOAA's data collection, research, management and enforcement capabilities critical to protecting and conserving fisheries resources would be gutted under the Bush Administration's proposed budget.

The Pacific Northwest governors said they want to see critical NOAA programs funded at higher levels. Specifically, they are seeking:

- \$4.10 million for Bering Sea groundfish.

- \$8.70 million for regional fisheries councils.

- \$7.50 million for domestic observer programs.

- \$9.37 million for enforcement and surveillance.

- \$170,000 for Japanese salmon interception.

- \$3 million for the Pacific Fishery Information Network.

- \$1.45 million for West Coast groundfish research.

- \$10.6 million for implementation of the Mitchell Act.

- \$6.5 million to help implement the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon treaty.