

Budget Agency

U.S. Unit Linked To Fund Snarl

Washington

The Office of Management and Budget deliberately is snarling public work projects in red tape so it won't have to spend appropriated funds, says the chairman of a House investigations subcommittee.

"Red tape is purposely fostered to keep the budgeted money from getting out," Representative Jim Wright (Dem-Tex.) told a reporter. "It is orchestrated by the Office of Management and Budget for the express purpose of keeping the government from spending money authorized by the programs."

Wright's public works subcommittee on investigations held hearings three years ago in an effort to cut through the red tape choking public works programs.

Since then, he has seen the average processing time for public works grants in an emergency economic program grow from 79 days to 348 days.

In one program designed to reduce water pollution, the rules and regulations imposed on grant applicants cut spending in the project's first 15 months to four per cent of the intended level.

"The maze of red tape, guidelines, restrictions, regulations and reporting requirements imposed on grant applicants for pollution programs more effectively threatens the program than do presidential impoundments," Wright said.

Within its first year, only \$17.3 million of \$5 billion planned for the clean water program was spent.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Agency, which administers the water program, acknowl-

edged that it was delayed in its early stages.

"We believe now that our past history and things are proceeding quite rapidly."

Associated Press