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Supervisors Narrowly Approve Sharp Park Plan

Mayor Lee considers vetoing legislation that could lead to closure of golf course

By: [John Upton](#)

San Francisco's Board of Supervisors narrowly approved a plan Tuesday that could lead to the closure of the golf course at Pacifica's Sharp Park, but Mayor Ed Lee is considering vetoing the proposal.

The board voted 6-5 to ask the city's Recreation and Park Department to offer the National Park Service a long-term agreement to manage the park, which is owned by the city of San Francisco.

Such an agreement would likely lead to the closure of the 18-hole golf course, because the park service has said it will not make any deal that includes managing the course.

The federal government wants to restore natural habitats in the 417-acre park, which is home to endangered species of snakes and frogs, and make it part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The plans include reviving a large tidal lagoon that has been largely filled in over the past century. The native vegetation that surrounded it has been replaced with fairways and greens, and pumps designed to prevent flooding have kept the lagoon's water levels low during the rainy season.

Environmentalists have argued in federal court that the pumping practices dry out the eggs of endangered red-legged frogs, in turn threatening the endangered garter snakes that feed upon the amphibians. They also say the snakes, which can swim, need more natural habitat for basking.

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Before Tuesday's vote, the measure was amended to remove a provision that would have closed the golf course outright, instead allowing talks with the park service to begin. Environmentalists declared victory nonetheless.

"This is a good step forward," said Jeff Miller, a conservation advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity who has fought for years to close down the golf course. "The hope is that the working relationship with the park service is going to be productive."

Golfers opposed the proposal. The San Francisco Public Golf Alliance submitted hundreds of letters to the Board of Supervisors from Bay Area golfers "who want this course open and want affordable golf," alliance member Anthony Soldato said during a committee hearing Monday.

Mayor Ed Lee has not decided whether he will sign or veto the legislation, according to spokeswoman Christine Falvey.

He has "concerns" about the measure, in part because of opposition from elected officials in San Mateo County, including Rep. Jackie Speier.

San Mateo County has been in talks with San Francisco to take over management of the golf course. The legislation allows those negotiations to continue, but it prevents any agreement from being signed if the parks service opts to take over the land.

The mayor is "going to reserve his final decision until he gets the legislation on his desk," Falvey said.

Supervisor John Avalos, the measure's author, was joined by board President David Chiu and supervisors Jane Kim, Eric Mar, David Campos and Ross Mirkarimi in voting in favor of the legislation.

Lee is scheduled to appoint a new supervisor to replace Mirkarimi, who was [elected sheriff](#) in November. That appointee could give opponents of the plan enough votes on the board to reverse Tuesday's decision.