

## BAY AREA & CALIFORNIA

### REDEVELOPMENT

# S.F. supervisors swiftly OK sale of Mission Bay bonds

**By Rachel Gordon**  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

With the doomsday clock ticking, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors rushed through approval Tuesday to sell \$70 million in tax increment bonds to fund redevelopment projects in the emerging Mission Bay neighborhood.

The board also signed off on the appropriation of \$5.4 million in tax-increment funds, money made available when the property tax value increases because of the redevelopment of blighted or underutilized property, generating extra revenue.

The vote came one day before the state Legislature could decide to support Gov. Jerry Brown's controversial plan to eliminate the redevelopment agencies in the state.

The move by the Democratic governor would free up an estimated \$1.7 billion to help plug California's \$25.4 billion deficit.

Opposed by San Francisco and other cities across the state that have relied on redevelopment money to fund affordable housing, commercial buildings and infrastructure upgrades in blighted neighborhoods, Brown has the backing of some public employees unions who want to see the money used instead to keep their programs and services intact.

The Board of Supervisors would have approved the issuance of the bonds for Mission Bay eventually, but by putting it on the fast track, the state will be obligated to set aside enough redevelopment money to repay the bond debt, regardless of wheth-

er state officials move to abolish California's redevelopment agencies.

Without the supervisors' quick action, the city's general fund, which pays

for everything from police to recreation centers, could be on the hook to cover the financing costs.

The bulk of the bond proceeds will be used to repay the Mission Bay developer for roads, utilities and other infrastructure improvements.

A little more than \$12 million will be used to fund the construction of a 150-unit housing complex

at 1180 Fourth St. in which 25 units will be set aside at affordable rates for formerly homeless families.

The proposed housing development, however, could have been in jeopardy if the governor's plan is approved and the Board of Supervisors didn't act, according to Amy Lee, deputy executive director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

"Given that there's such a large level of uncertainty, we thought it was the most prudent thing to do, to make sure we got this completed and are fulfilling our obligations," said Supervisor Carmen Chu, chair of the board's Budget and Finance Committee.

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### S.F. ELECTIONS

# Skeptical judges challenge critic of ranked-choice votes

**By Bob Egelko**  
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An opponent of San Francisco's instant-runoff elections, in which voters rank their top three candidates, told an apparently skeptical federal appeals court Tuesday that the system disenfranchises tens of thousands of residents.

All voters who fail to choose one of the front-runners are denied "the right to have their vote counted in the most crucial part of an election, when the winner is decided," attorney James Parrinello argued at a hearing of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

to three candidates on a single ballot.

If no one gets a majority, officials eliminate the last-place candidate and redistribute his or her second-place votes, a process that continues until someone tops 50 percent.

Parrinello, representing a former candidate for supervisor and a group of voters, said the system violates the rights of people whose ballots are discarded as their candidates are eliminated. Members of the three-judge panel seemed unconvinced.

"They just voted for three losing people," Judge Marsha Berzon said.

Judge Richard Paez said the ballot appears to in-

cluded Deputy City Attorney Andrew Shen.

By that logic, asked Judge Carlos Bea, why not let voters rank every candidate in the race?

Shen replied that computer vendors told the city their machines could accommodate only three choices.

A federal judge upheld ranked-choice voting in April. The appeals court accelerated its hearing at Parrinello's request and is likely to rule well before the November election for mayor.

One mayoral candidate is City Attorney Dennis Herrera, whose office is defending the voting law.

Chief Deputy City At-

torney Thomas Stewart says the system subverts majority will and denies voters a clear choice between two top candidates. They cite the November elections for Oakland mayor, in which eventual winner Jean Quan was second in the initial tally, and for supervisor in San Francisco's District 10, where Malia Cohen received just 11.8 percent of the first-place votes but picked up enough second- and third-choice votes to win.

In court papers, Parrinello argued that the city should either return to conventional runoffs or award the election to the top vote-getter in the primary. But Berzon said the latter system, like instant runoffs, determines victory by a plurality of the total votes rather than a majority.

"There's no constitutional right to have a ma-

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