

## Supervisors won't fill vacancy on coastal panel

### Board splits 3-2; decision seen as a blow to opponents of a Devil's Slide bypass

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REDWOOD CITY — In a move that ultimately strikes a blow to opponents of a Devil's Slide bypass, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors decided Tuesday against filling a vacancy on a coastal advisory panel.

The 3-2 vote by the supervisors means the seven-member Mid-Coast Community Council will operate without Ric Lohman, 47 — an opponent of the Devil's Slide bypass and the council's choice for the vacant seat — or any other candidate until after the November elec-

tion.

And while Board President Ted Lempert said that politicizing the process "was a mistake," both Lohman's supporters and his opponents conceded that the issue is about more than just filling an empty seat.

"This is an election campaign being played out in our chambers," said Supervisor Tom Huening before joining Supervisors Mike Nevin and Mary Griffin — both supporters of the bypass — in rejecting the council's choice.

The vote comes almost two weeks after the damaged portion of Highway 1 at Devil's Slide was reopened after being closed

for five months due to heavy winter rains. Debate rages, however, on whether a permanent solution to the problem should come in the form a 4.5 mile inland bypass over the region or a tunnel of less than a mile in length through area.

But Huening said it would be imprudent to fill a vacancy a day after the election filing period for the seat began.

But others charged the board majority with abandoning precedent in order to advance its own coastal agenda.

"This directly subverts the democratic process," said MCCC chairman Jim Marsh, after documenting how the council

had followed guidelines, that the board had endorsed, for filling two previous vacancies.

Supporters of Lohman said the vacancy would leave the council, created in 1991, without the resources to do its job.

"This forces the council to work shorthanded and is a slap in the face to the council and the process that selected Lohman," said Ann Forrister of Montara.

Both Lempert and Supervisor Ruben Barrales voted for the MCCC recommendation.

After Suzanne Hays Kane resigned in April, the MCCC, which advises the supervisors on issues facing the 11,000 residents of Moss Beach, El Gran-

ada, Princeton, Miramar and Montara, publicized the vacancy and held a candidate's forum to determine who would be recommended to the supervisors for appointment.

After Lohman was chosen June 14 over three candidates, some coastside residents charged that his presence would further stack the MCCC with environmentalists in favor of building a tunnel at Devil's Slide.

While Lohman's supporters were lobbying the MCCC, Marsh charged that his opponents avoided the council and went directly to the supervisors, who

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