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## Calif. county agrees to shut down windmills deadly to birds

*The Associated Press*

ALTAMONT, Calif. - The Alameda County Board of Supervisors agreed Thursday to shut down hundreds of windmills in the Altamont Pass each winter to protect migrating birds but chose not to shut them all down.

The measure passed 4-0 with one abstention and still needs to get final approval from the board in September.

Environmentalists said they were upset the board did not adopt a measure endorsed by Attorney General Bill Lockyer that would have shut down all the windmills each winter.

"This measure does not go far enough - they are still killing way too many birds," Jeff Miller of the Center for Biological Diversity in Oakland told the San Francisco Chronicle.

But wind-mill operators thought the plan was fair.

"We've been saying all along that we need a plan that preserves this renewable wind-power source at Altamont and saves the lives of birds," said Nicki Carlson, an attorney for the wind-farm operators. "This is a big step toward both."

The measure calls for about 750 windmills to be shut down in November and December, and 750 others to be closed down in January and February. It also calls for 100 of the most deadly turbines to be shut down permanently, and for less deadly turbines to be phased on over the next 13 years.

The Altamont Pass, located between the San Francisco Bay area and the San Joaquin Valley, has become one of the nation's leading producers of wind power, generating enough pollution-free electricity annually to power 120,000 homes for a year.

But the Altamont, where more than 5,000 windmills line the hilltops, has also become a death trap for thousands of migrating birds that get chopped up in fast-rotating turbine blades as they fly through or hunt for prey.

An estimated 1,700 to 4,700 birds are killed each year in the 50-square-mile Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area, and of those fatalities, between 880 and 1,300 are federally protected raptors such as burrowing owls, red-tailed hawks and golden eagles, according to a study released last year by the California Energy Commission.