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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

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## Sharp Park Golf Course on the chopping block?

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by MARISA LAGOS

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UPDATE: Supervisor Sean Elsbernd apparently isn't scared of a controversy either. He introduced competing legislation late Tuesday that would landmark the historic golf course -- and probably throw a wrench into Mirkarimi's restoration proposal.

Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi may have just unwittingly walked into a snake pit -- one filled with frogs, too.

On Tuesday, the supervisor injected himself into a long standing, emotionally charged fight over the future of one the city's golf courses, Sharp Park, with legislation that could spell the course's demise.

Mirkarimi's legislation, if passed, would direct the Recreation and Parks Department to develop a plan to restore the area for two threatened species that call the coastal wetlands and golf course home, the red-legged frog and the San Francisco garter snake. The ordinance would also require the city to give the park to the National Park Service or jointly manage it with them; and either retain, redesign or eliminate the golf course.

Sounds simple, but this is San Francisco. The Center for Biological Diversity has been making noise

since last year about the federally protected animals, and has threatened to sue the city if it doesn't restore their habitat. (The city already got in in hot water for hurting the protected species a few years ago.)

All of that came in the midst of a (long and contentious) process meant to parse out what the city should do with all of its golf courses -- a process that ended with no agreement but lots of arguing. Suffice to say, there's a lot of opposition to the mere thought of shuttering the course (golfers don't want to close any courses but particularly balked about the scenic Sharp Park, which was designed by the world famous architect Alister Mackenzie and landscaped by John McLaren).

Mirkarimi insists that legislation doesn't necessarily spell the course's demise, but hinted it may not stay as an 18-hole course. He said the issue has been "simmering a long time" and the city needs to reach an outcome.

Our prediction: whatever the outcome is, it won't come easy.