

Pilots' group wants Sky Park issue placed before voters in November

Airports
SANTA CRUZ — Voters in Santa Cruz had nothing to say about the closure of Sky Park Airport, maintains a pilots' organization called the Santa Cruz Memorial Airport Association.

That's why the association says it is circulating a petition in coming weeks to try to "reactivate" the airport owned by the city of Santa Cruz on land just outside the Scotts Valley city limits.

A decision last year by the Santa Cruz City Council closed the airport on Dec. 31. The pilots have filed a \$30-million lawsuit against the city and have also taken their case to the state court of appeals.

"The City Council deceived its constituents" when it voted to close the airport, according to the petition.

According to the petition, the council "contrived exaggerated claims of expense and other concerns" related to the operation of the airport. These claims, according to the petition, were used "largely for the purpose of breaking a lease."

The city owned the airport, but its

management was leased out to airport operator, Jim Dahm. When the council voted to shut down the airport, it effectively decided to discontinue the lease.

Since that time, large yellow X's have been painted on the runway as an aviation signal to pilots that the airstrip is closed.

According to the petition, "The Northern Santa Cruz County population requires an airport; we have one . . . let's re-commission it."

Jack van Allen, a member of the airport association who organized the petition drive, said 3,500 signatures are needed to force the issue onto the November 8 ballot.