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# Vote on port district's fate postponed in Santa Cruz

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A political decision that could result in a major change or even the dissolution of the Santa Cruz Port District was put on hold for two months Wednesday.

At their monthly meeting, members of the county's Local Agency Formation Commission told port district officials to sit down with Santa Cruz county and city representatives to determine how property taxes that accrue to the port might be better divided to benefit residents.

Pat McCormick, the commission's executive director, said the problem is that the port district dips into the pockets of property owners who never take advantage of the yacht harbor.

He has argued that the commission might consider the harbor instead as an enterprise, much like a private business, which would support itself by charging higher fees to boat

owners and others who use it.

McCormick said Wednesday that the port district has several options, including maintaining the status quo or raising users' fees. Other possibilities include turning harbor operation over to either the city or the county.

But he stressed that "there is no hidden agenda," and that neither the city nor the county has expressed any interest in taking over the marine facility.

The port district collected about \$385,000 in property taxes during the 1990 fiscal year, but only 45 percent of boat owners renting slips at the harbor live within the district and pay property taxes to support the facility. Another 28 percent live outside the district but in Santa Cruz County, while the remaining 27 percent live outside the county.

The port district stretches from the west-  
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## Officials to weigh options for yacht harbor

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ern outskirts of Santa Cruz to Cabrillo College.

Although there are no plans for anyone else to take over operation of the harbor, McCormick said, the city, the county and district taxpayers might want to compare the port with the De Laveaga golf course. That facility, owned by the city of Santa Cruz, is self-supporting through memberships

and greens fees charged to golfers, he said.

At Wednesday's meeting, Commissioner Robley Levy said support for the district from residents and boat owners "is very, very strong. People seem satisfied with the way the district manages the harbor."

The commission will take another look at the matter May 1, after port district commissioners and city and county representatives try to negotiate an equitable way to spend property tax dollars collected for operation of the harbor, including alternative means of financing district costs.