



Put bay row in dock: mayor

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MORETON mayor Allan Sutherland wants the Planning and Environment Court and not the State Government to decide the fate of a controversial \$628 million North Harbour project on the environmentally-sensitive Caboolture River.

"The Planning and Environment Court is the appropriate jurisdiction to deal with an appeal against the council decision," Cr Sutherland said. "And, frankly, I trust the court more than the co-ordinator-general's department."

The State Government looks set to override Moreton regional council and approve the massive residential, marina, golf course and business precinct despite councillors voting it down 11-2.

The river it is on feeds into a Moreton Bay green zone.

Cr Sutherland, a politically unaligned mayor, has threatened to "go to war" with the Bligh Government if it approves the development.

He said the State Government advertised on its own website that the court was the best place to deal with disputes regarding developments.

"The court won't make a political decision; the Government will," Cr Sutherland said.

"I'm not doing this to beat up the Government; I just want to stop the project." He said the North Harbour project would require dredging of up to 9km of the river to provide access to the bay for 1200 boats.

He said sensitive bird habitats on wetlands at the mouth of the river would be dredged if the development went ahead.

Council voted against the eastern half of the proposal, including the

marina, fearing dredging would result in sediment run-off harmful to Moreton Bay Marine Park green zones.

The State Government also has declined to release to the council an Environmental Protection Agency report on the proposal. However, a positive evaluation of the project by the co-ordinator-general Col Jensen was released yesterday.

In it he says: "I have determined that on balance there is significant positive net benefit to the community from the development of the project that it can proceed, subject to a number of specific conditions."

He said submissions should be sent to the department by Friday.

Green groups said yesterday it would be impossible for them to digest the developer's 10,000 page EIS and respond in time.



CONTROVERSY: How *The Courier-Mail* reported the standoff.