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# Price Tag Set in Battle Over Bags

## 5-cent fee proposed for checkouts

By [MEGAN MCGRATH](#)

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Megan McGrath/WRC

Paper or plastic?

The answer to that question, unless it's "neither," could soon cost you a nickel in the District.

Price Tag Set in Battle Over Bags



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- Q:[Is 5 Cents a Reasonable Cost for a Paper or Plastic Bag?](#)

Members of the D.C. Council are introducing legislation that, if passed, would impose a 5-cent fee for every single-use bag used at a store checkout. The fee would apply to plastic and paper bags at many businesses, including grocery, convenience and drug stores.

The legislation is intended to reduce the number of plastic bags making their way into the Anacostia River and its tributaries. According to a recent report, the fee would eliminate 21 percent of the trash in the Anacostia as well as 47 percent of the trash in its tributaries.

According to a study by the D.C. Department of the Environment, the majority of trash in the Anacostia River consists of plastic bags, bottles, food wrappers and Styrofoam. Plastic bags make up half the trash found in the river's tributaries.

"We found in a one-year period after about 300 hours of survey about 14,000 bags just hung up in the trees and in the water," said Jim Connolly, of the Anacostia Watershed Society.

District officials hope the fee will reduce pollution by encouraging people to turn to reusable bags instead of disposable ones.

Some of the money collected would be given to the businesses and the rest would be used to cleanup the river and provide reusable bags to those in need.

Similar bans or fees have been proposed in the past in Arlington, Baltimore and Annapolis.

**More Information:**

[Anacostia River Initiatives](#)

[TrashfreeAnacostia.com](#)


[Anacostia Trash Reduction Plan](#)

[ReusableBags.com](#)

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