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## San Francisco Delays Decision on Expanding Plastic Bag Ban

By: Bay City News Service



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Plastic bags must survive the washer

San Francisco supervisors Tuesday delayed a decision on a proposal to institute a fee for each checkout bag a store in San Francisco provides to customers while one supervisor questioned whether the proposed fee was too high.

The proposal, introduced by Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, would charge customers 10 cents per bag starting in 2013, then 25 cents the following year. The store would keep the money to use how they see fit.

The legislation would also expand a law passed by the board in 2007 banning supermarkets and chain store pharmacies from providing single-use, non-compostable plastic bags to customers.

The ban would be expanded to include all retail establishments starting in July 2012, then all food establishments in 2013.

The board was set to vote on the proposal today, but Mirkarimi asked that the vote be delayed until Dec. 6 because of amendments made to the legislation, which include requiring the city controller's office to assess the economic impacts of the 10-cent charge once it goes into effect and potential impact of the 25-cent charge.

During the two-week delay, Supervisor Scott Wiener asked for more information to be provided to him on whether the charge needed to be increased to 25 cents.

He said "25 cents seems quite high to me," and that such a fee could negatively impact low-income residents in the city.

Wiener said he had talked to officials at Safeway who estimated the cost of providing paper bags to customers added up to somewhere between five and 10 cents per bag.

Mirkarimi said the high fee was necessary because "even though San Francisco was the first city in the country ... to have the bag ban, other cities took our example and have blown by us."

The vote was delayed for two weeks because the board will not meet next Tuesday.

The proposal, which includes certain exemptions such as "doggy bags" used to take leftovers from restaurants, has gotten support from some members of the local business community, including the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

However, when the legislation was discussed at a board committee last week, the attorney for the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition said his group plans to take legal action against the city if the proposal is approved.