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### \$2 Trash Bags Create Controversy in Mauldin

#### ***Proposal Would Limit Trash Collection To Special Bags***

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**MAULDIN, S.C.** -- Mauldin City Council is considering a plan to revamp their trash collection service that would involve selling trash bags at up to \$2 each.

The printed bags would come from a company called Waste Zero, and trash collectors would only pick up trash contained in the approved bags.

City Administrator Trey Eubanks said the move is an effort to balance the city budget, which is expected to be short on funds because of the economic woes. He said the bags are projected to raise about \$585,000 next year, and would partially off-set the cost of trash collection, which he said usually tops \$1 million annually.

The price would be \$1.25 for 15-gallon bags and \$2 for 30-gallon bags, he said.

The program, nicknamed "pay as you throw" has been used for years by some cities in the northwest and New England.

Shelley Robbins of Upstate Forever, a non-profit group that works to protect natural resources, is not involved with the proposal in Mauldin but has long been a supporter of "pay as you throw" plans in general.

"It becomes like our electricity, our gas, our water, where we pay attention to the volume all of a sudden," she said.

She said the plans significantly increase recycling in areas where they are implemented and that recycling would benefit the local economy.

"Recycling employs over 37,000 people in South Carolina, and there's a significant recycling cluster right here in the Upstate between Greenville in Spartanburg," she said

She also said that the "pay as you throw" system spreads the cost of trash pick up more fairly by charging more from people who produce more trash.

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But opponents of the plan say it unfairly burdens large families and people on fixed incomes.

"This is one more way that local government is interfering and taxing those that can afford it the least," said Dan Herren, a member of the Greenville County GOP who lives in Mauldin.

Herren sees the project as a power grab by the city that would take away freedoms in regard to how people dispose of their trash.

"The city of Mauldin is going as far as to say, 'If you don't use our bag, your garbage will pile up outside your house, and we will then fine you,'" he said.

Herren also says he already recycles all he can, but that his family of five still produces enough trash to fill several bags each week. He said the city should look at more ways to cut costs before finding more ways to raise revenues.

Eubanks said the budget for the coming year -- with the revenues from the proposal included -- would be about six percent smaller than from last year.

A public meeting about the proposal is scheduled for April 6 at 6:30 pm at Mauldin City Hall.

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