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The District's Bag Law

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Environment





Presentation Outline

- Overview of the law
- Enforcement process
- Revenue collected and how it's used
- Effectiveness of the law



How the law came about

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Anacostia River Clean Up & Protection Act (“Bag Law”)

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Effective January 1, 2010, all District retailers that sell food or alcohol must charge a 5¢ fee for each **paper** or **plastic** disposable bag provided to customers at the point of sale.



Intent of the law

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To change behavior
VS.
generate revenue.





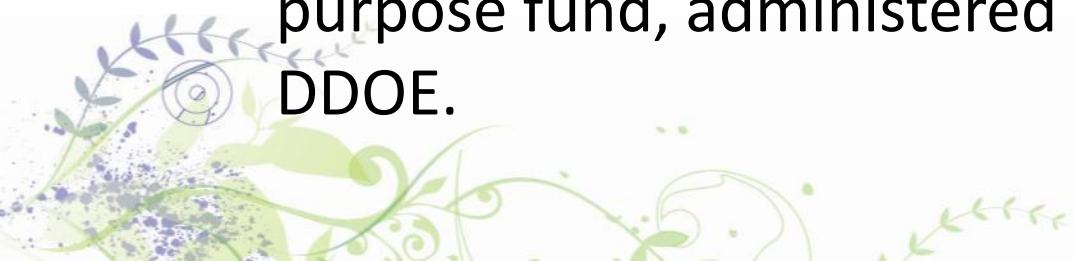
Inspection and Enforcement Process



Where does the nickel go?



- Businesses retain \$.01 and submit \$.04 to the Office of Tax and Revenue
- *Carry-out Bag Credit Program* allows businesses to keep \$.02 of the \$.05 collected.
- Fees deposited into special purpose fund, administered by DDOE.





Revenue Collected

- **\$8,715,455** in bag fee revenue has been collected as of May 2014.
- Approximately **\$2 million** in revenue a year.
- Roughly **\$160,000** a month is remitted.



Projects funded by the law

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YOUR LITTER HITS CLOSE TO HOME.

Piece by piece, litter adds up, and makes the places we go to every day unsafe and unhealthy.

Take control.
Take care of your trash.

www.trashfreopotomac.org



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REVEALS LIES.

Learn More

Campaign brought to you by Alex Ferguson Foundation, Watershed for Washington Council of Governments, the District of Columbia Government, the Montgomery County Government, the Prince George's County Government, the Fairfax County Government, the City of Arlington Government, the Clarke County Government, and the City of Rockville Government.

BANDALONG LITTER TRAP

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Working Toward a Trash Free
Anacostia River

Anacostia RIVERKEEPER

Bandalong Litter Trap™

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Comprehensive Study

- In February 2012, DDOE released a Request for Applications to measure the **impact of the Bag Law on disposable bag usage rates** in the District.
- OpinionWorks, the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Anacostia Watershed Society submitted a joint application and were awarded a \$60,000 grant to conduct a year-long study.
- Project objectives:
 - Quantify change in bag use
 - Measure attitudes and experiences with the law



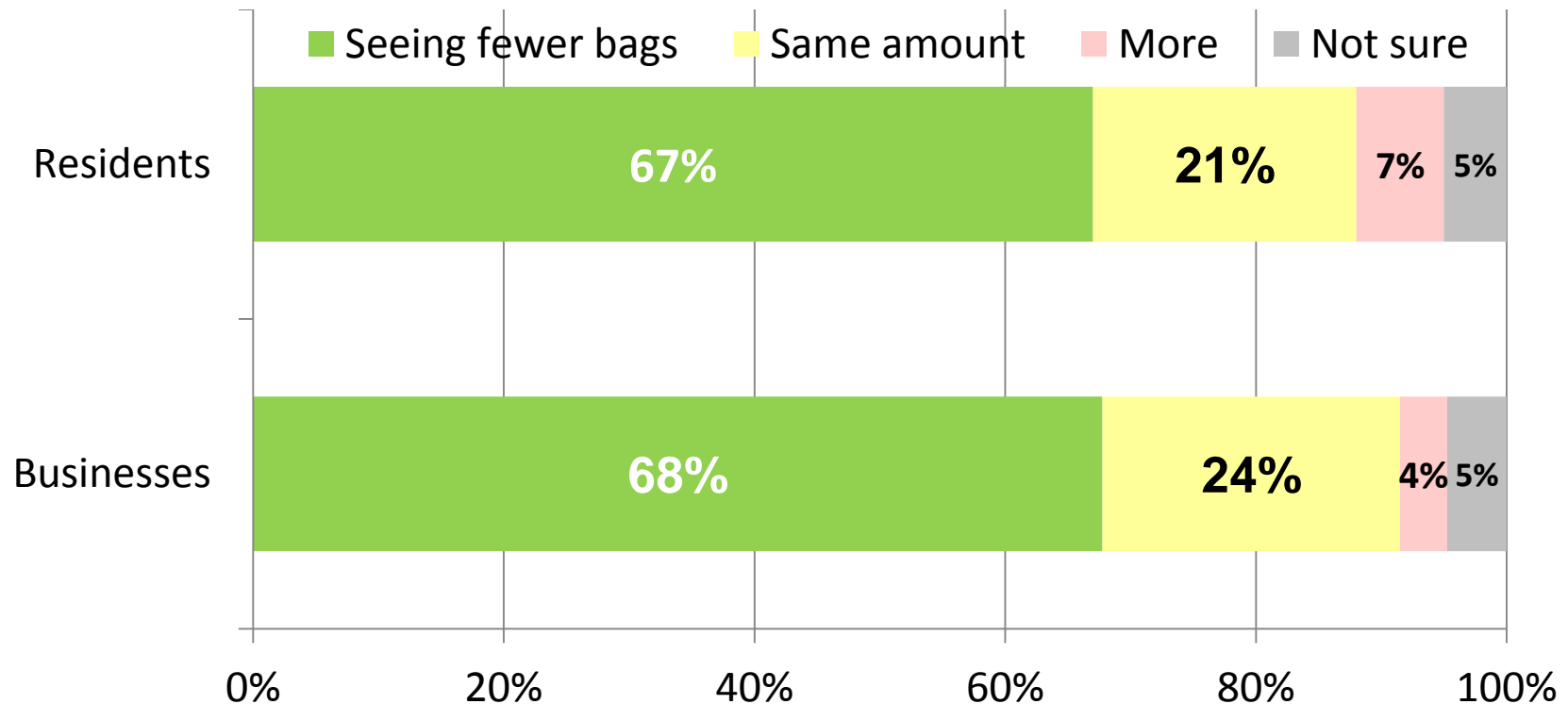


Who was surveyed?

- Residents:
 - 600 randomly selected residents
 - Landlines and cell phones
 - Dates: January 16-20, 2013
- Businesses
 - 177 randomly selected business owners
 - Front-line owners and managers
 - Combination of in-person and phone interviews, including the use of two interpreters
 - Dates: February 14 – April 9, 2013



Reduction in Plastic Bag Litter



“Compared to three or four years ago, are you seeing (randomize): [more, fewer, (or) about the same amount of] plastic bags found as litter around your business?”

Neighborhood Litter



Grading the Neighborhood as “Clean and Free of Trash”

	A	B	C	D	F
Residents 2013	19%	34%	29%	11%	6%
Residents 2010	21%	39%	28%	6%	6%
Businesses 2013	18%	45%	20%	7%	9%

**Overall litter has not decreased,
while plastic bag litter is down *dramatically*.**

“If I were to ask you to grade how clean and free of trash the streets, sidewalks, alleys, {and parks in your own neighborhood/in the area immediately surrounding your business} are on an A to F scale where “A” is best and “F” is worst, what grade would you give?”





Residents are Using 80% fewer bags

74% of African-American
80% of White
86% of Hispanic
87% of Asian
91% of Mixed Race

**...Residents using fewer
disposable bags.**

19%

80%

- Reduced
- Not reduced
- Not sure/Never used

“As you may recall, in 2010 D.C. introduced a new 5-cent fee on disposable bags at stores and carry-outs. Have you reduced your usage of disposable bags since the 5-cent bag fee was introduced in 2010?”

Estimated Household Bag Use



Number of Bags	Typical Week Before the Law	“The Last Week” (Jan. 2013)
0	3%	23%
1	2%	7%
2	5%	9%
3-5	21%	25%
6-9	11%	10%
10-19	30%	17%
20+	20%	8%
Not sure	8%	1%
Median	10 bags	4 bags

“Before the 5-cent bag fee was introduced in 2010, about how many disposable bags came into your household from stores and carry-outs in a typical week?”

“If you were to think back over the last week, in other words the last seven days, and try to estimate the number of disposable bags that have come into your household from stores and carry-out restaurants located in D.C., what number would you say?”



Bag Use by Type of Store

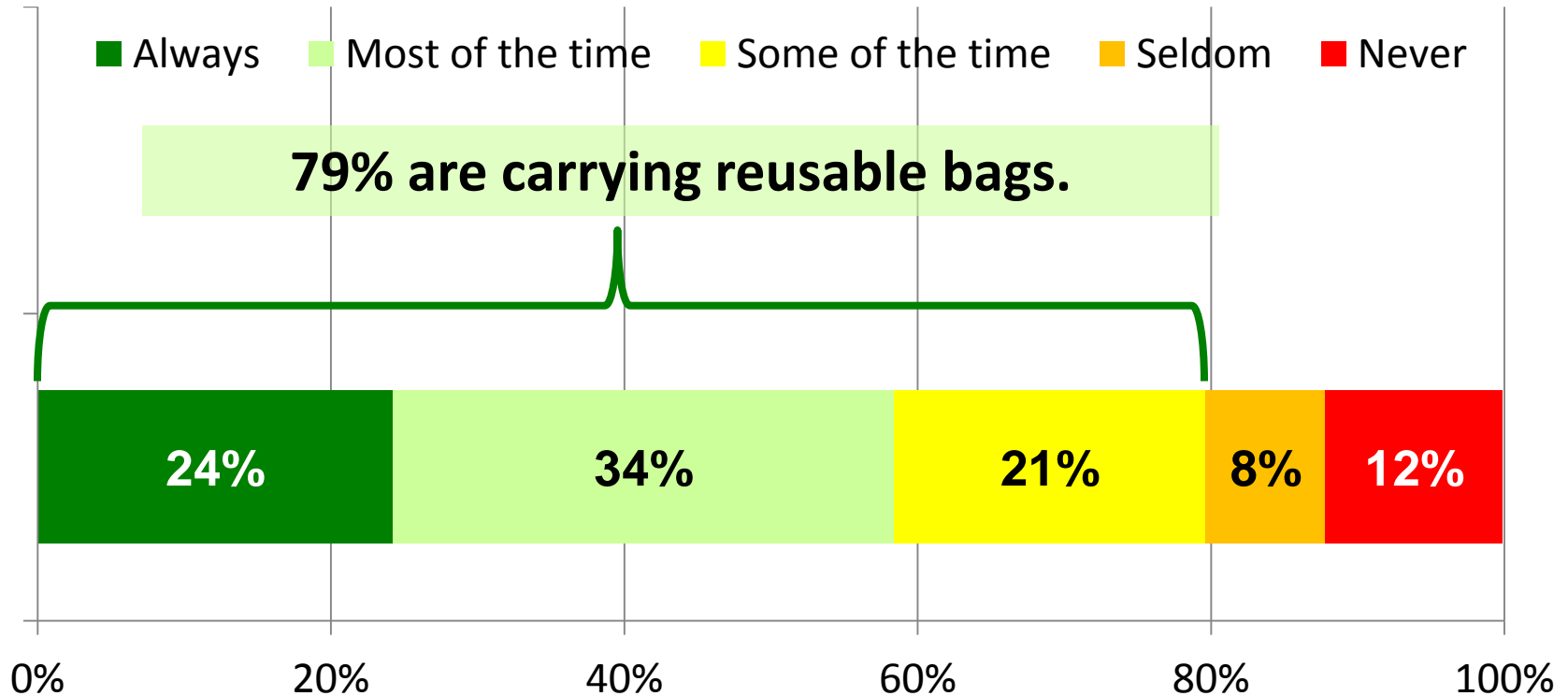
	Grocery Stores	Liquor Stores	Convenience Stores	Department Stores
Mean	4.28	0.44	1.32	0.93

“I would like to ask about some specific types of stores located in D.C. Again, just give me your best guess. Over the last seven days, how many disposable bags have you gotten from...??”





Residents Carrying Reusable Bags



“Are you bringing reusable bags with you when you shop always, most of the time, some of the time, seldom, or never?”

Change in Bags Purchased by Businesses

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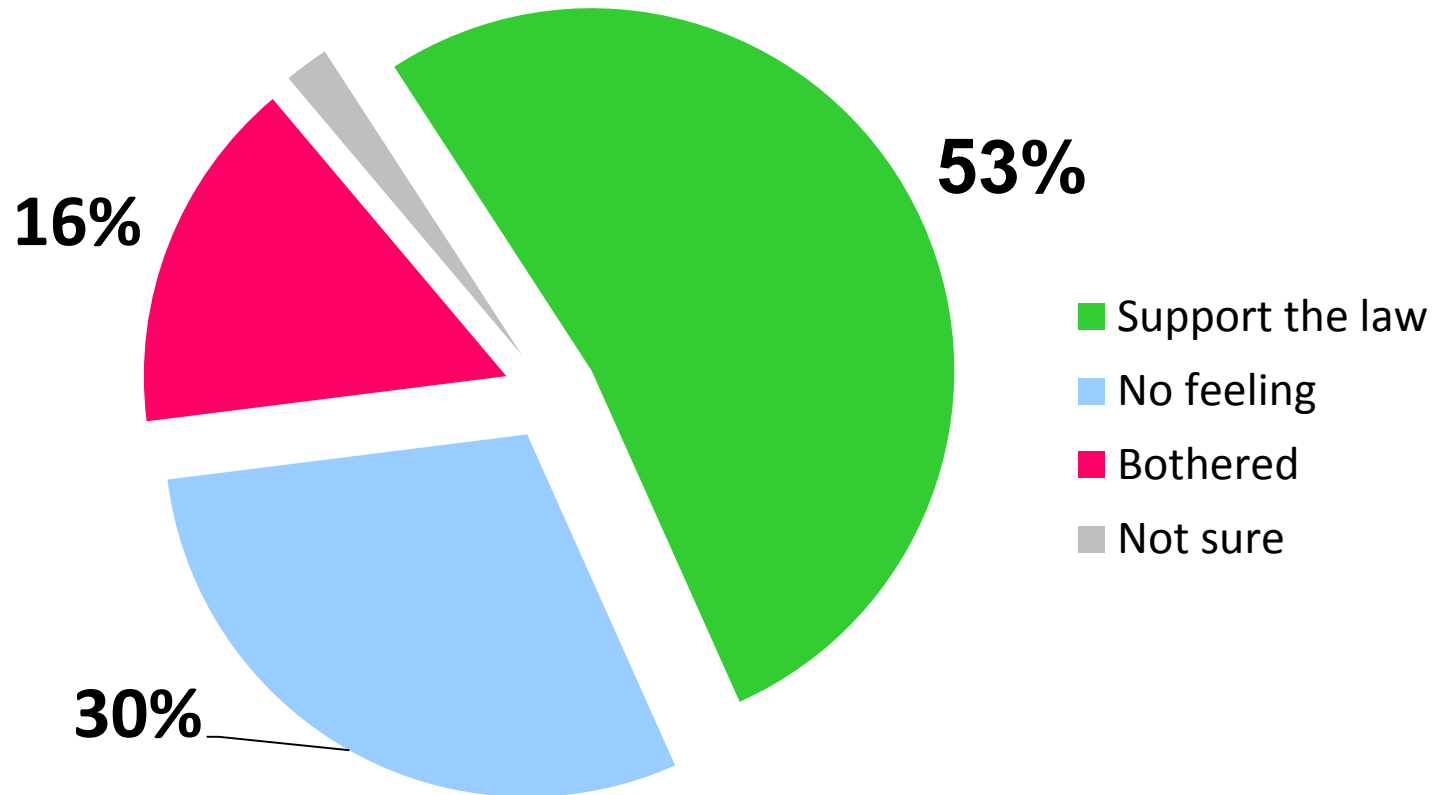


Calculated Change	% of Businesses
81 – 100% reduction	4%
61 – 80% reduction	20%
41 – 60% reduction	44%
21 – 40% reduction	23%
1 – 20% reduction	2%
No change	6%
Increase	2%
Median	50% reduction

“How many disposable bags are you buying for your business in a typical month today, whether that is the total number of bags, the number of cases of bags you order, or the amount your business spends on disposable bags?”

“Using the same type of measurement, in other words (fill in appropriate measure based on prior question): {number of bags/cases of bags/dollars spent on bags}, how many disposable bags were you buying for your business in a typical month before the bag law went into effect three years ago?”

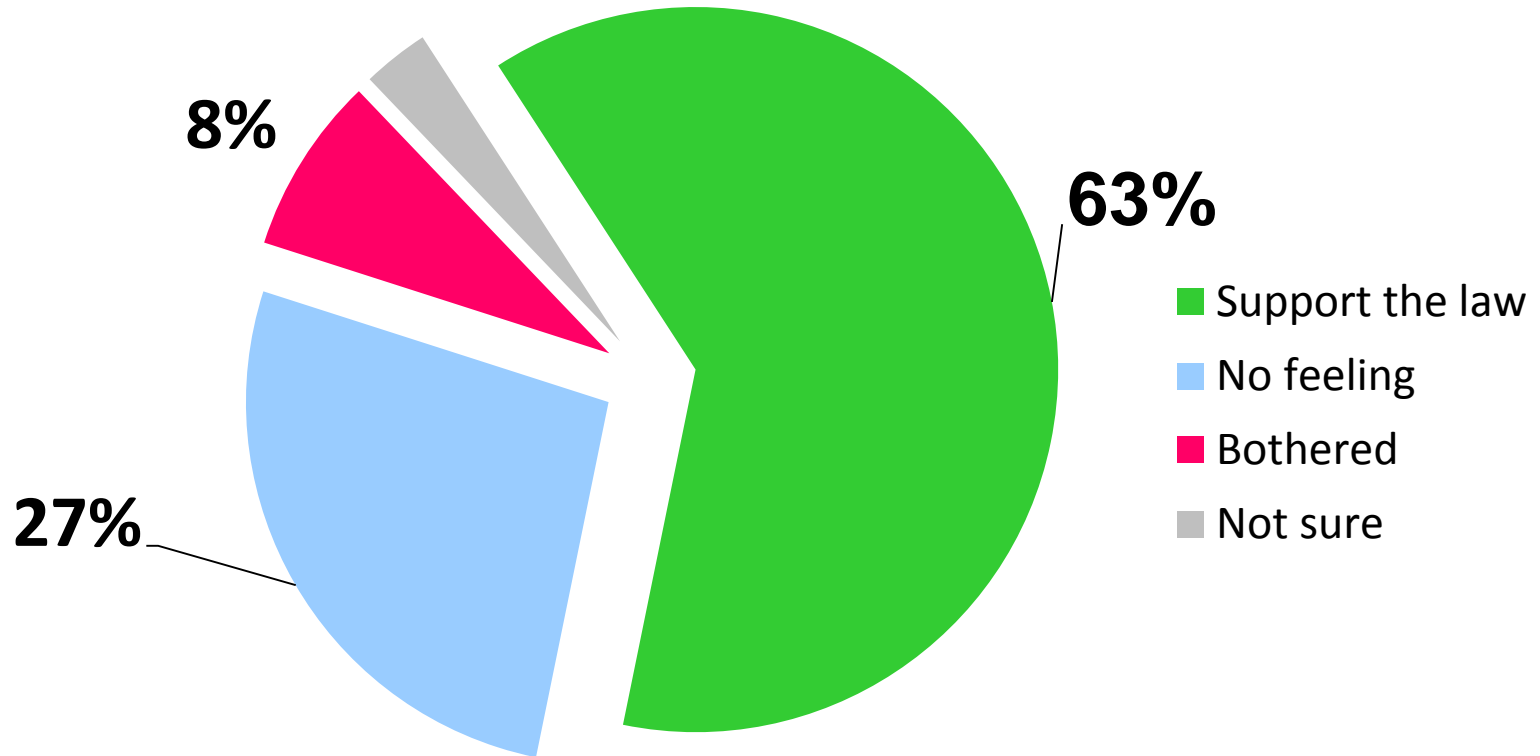
Resident Support for Bag Law



“Do you support the law, are you bothered by the law, or do you have no feelings about it either way?”

Business Support for Bag Law

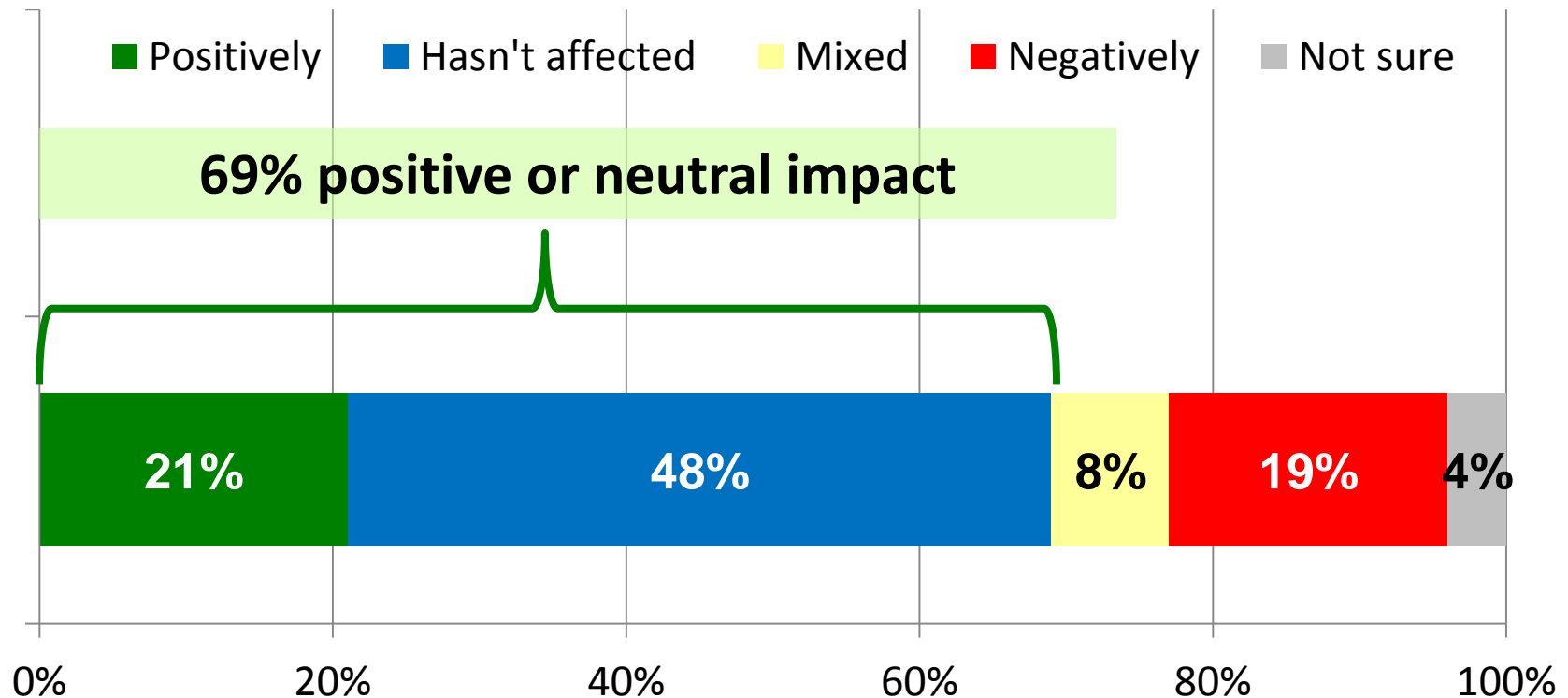
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“Do you personally support the law, are you bothered by the law, or do you have no feelings about it either way?”

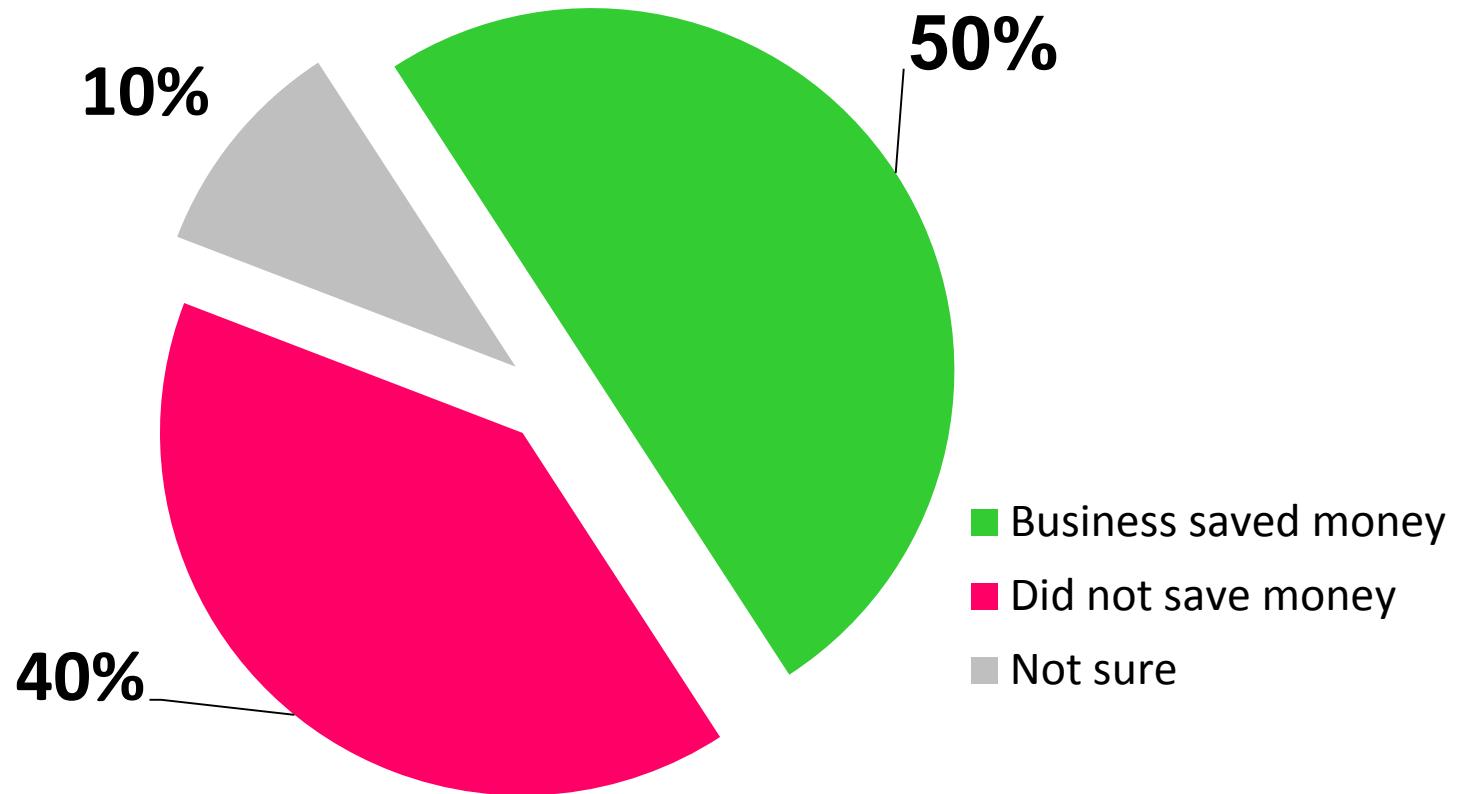


Impact of Bag Fee on Businesses



“Overall, has the bag fee affected your business positively, negatively, or hasn’t affected you either way?”

Financial Impact on Businesses



“Have you found that your business has saved money by buying fewer bags for your customers, or through keeping a portion of the 5-cent fee?”

Law's Purpose from a Resident Perspective



Main Purpose of the Law	
To encourage people to use fewer disposable bags	51%
To raise general revenue for the D.C. Government	23%
To raise money for a specific purpose	15%
Or something else	8%
All of those purposes (Not read)	2%
Not sure	6%

**Residents primarily see the law
as an agent of behavior change,
not revenue-raising.**

“Which of these do you think is the main purpose of the law?” (Read list.)

Summary



- **80%** of DC residents have reduced their usage of disposable bags since the law took effect.
- Households estimate using **4 bags a week today vs. 10 bags a week** before the law took effect.
- Businesses provide an average of **50% fewer bags**.
- **67% of residents** and **68% of businesses** reported seeing less plastic bags found as litter today versus three or four years ago.
- **50% of businesses** have saved money as a result of the Bag Law.
- **83% of residents** and **90% of businesses** either support or are indifferent to the Bag Law, with only 16% of residents and 8% of businesses feeling bothered by the law.



Contact

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