

Grocer to donate part of 5-cent bag fee to charity

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STAR STAFF

The Loblaw grocery chain in Toronto begins charging customers 5 cents a plastic bag today and says "partial proceeds" from the fee will go to World Wildlife Fund-Canada.

The chain announced the ongoing donation yesterday but said it won't reveal how much of the money goes to the conservation group until April, when its pay-for-plastic initiative goes nationwide.

Loblaw also introduced signs in stores reminding shoppers to bring their own reusable bags and promotions including a sale on reusable bags.

The company also announced the bags shoppers get for a nickel will be extra thick and made from "plastic waste material."

The city originally planned to force retailers to give customers a 10 -cent refund if they brought their own bags but, after lobbying from the grocery industry, councillors last month instead approved the mandatory five-cent fee for Toronto stores, effective June 1.

Shortly before councillors voted, Loblaw and Sobeys pledged that any excess revenue from the fee would be donated to environmental non-profit causes.

But they cautioned the proceeds would be decreased by their spending on publicity, staff training and checkout redesign to accommodate reusable bags.