Celebrating 15 Years!

FY 2025 SUMMARY REPORT

ANACOSTIA RIVER

CLEAN UP & PROTECTION FUND

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

doee.dc.gov/bags

Background

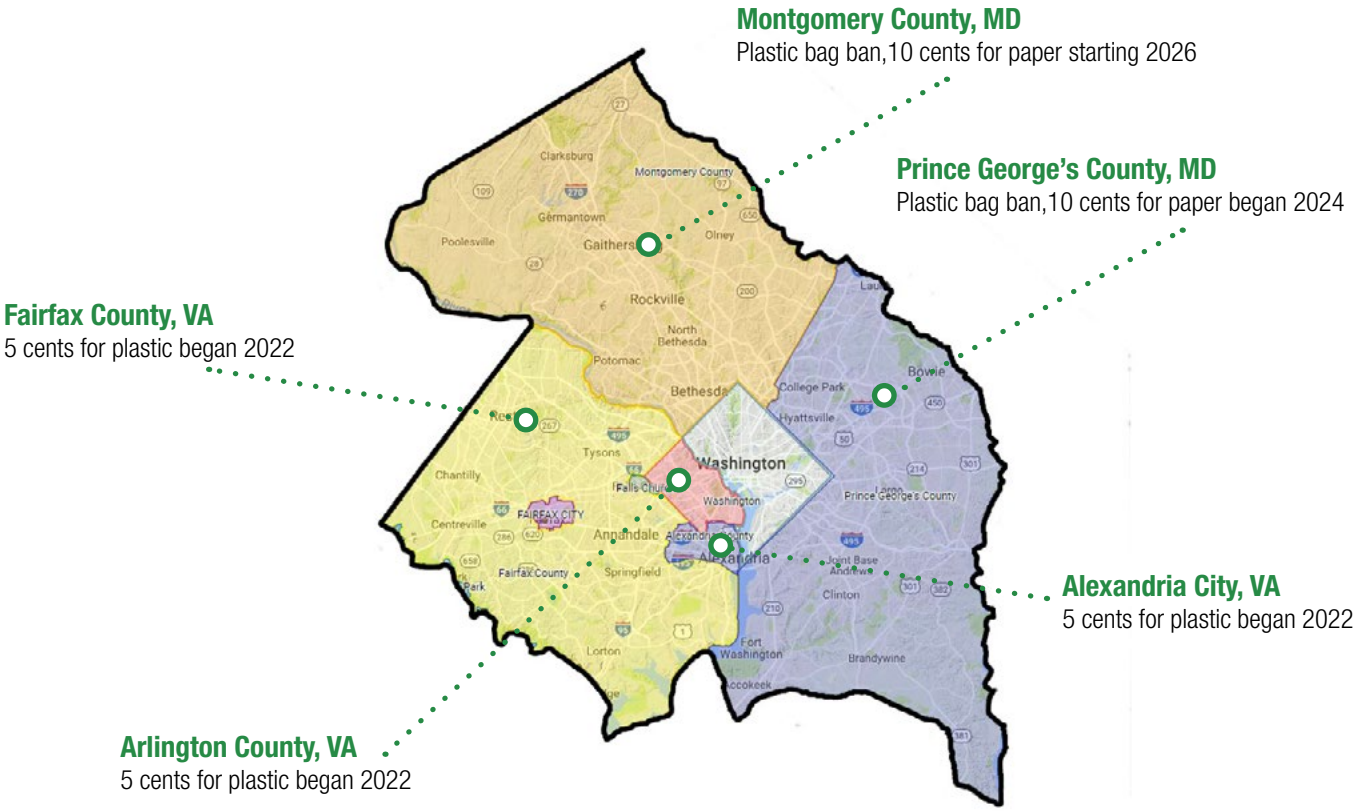
On January 1, 2010, the District of Columbia ("the District") became the first jurisdiction in the country to charge a fee for single-use carryout bags when the Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Act of 2009 ("the Act") took effect. Since then, residents and community members have shared anecdotal and empirical evidence of a reduced presence of plastic bags in and near local waterways. This is largely attributed to behavior change among consumers who have increasingly switched from disposable to reusable shopping bags.

Nationwide, hundreds of jurisdictions have some form of regulation on single-use carryout bags. While they largely followed the District's model of charging a fee, in recent years the policy landscape has been shifting away from plastic altogether. More jurisdictions are banning plastic carryout bags and charging for non-plastic alternatives, usually paper.

The Local Landscape

In 2024, Prince George's County, Maryland banned single-use plastic bags and began charging 10 cents for non-plastic single-use bags (usually made of paper) with some exemptions. Montgomery County, Maryland has now joined, having passed legislation in 2025 to ban plastic bags and raise the fee on paper bags from 5 to 10 cents beginning on January 1, 2026. While Maryland does not have a statewide plastic bag ban, Prince George's and Montgomery counties combined are home to almost one third of the state's population. Other Maryland localities have passed plastic bag bans of their own, including in the state's other major population center: Baltimore City in 2021 and Baltimore County in 2023.

The District's other neighbor, Virginia, updated its law in 2020 to permit localities to implement a five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags. (Their law refers to this as a tax, while the District's law considers it a fee.) As of 2026, eleven Virginia jurisdictions have implemented the tax. These different policies throughout the region all contribute to the goal of reducing plastic pollution in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



Bag Fund Revenue by Source, FY10 to FY25

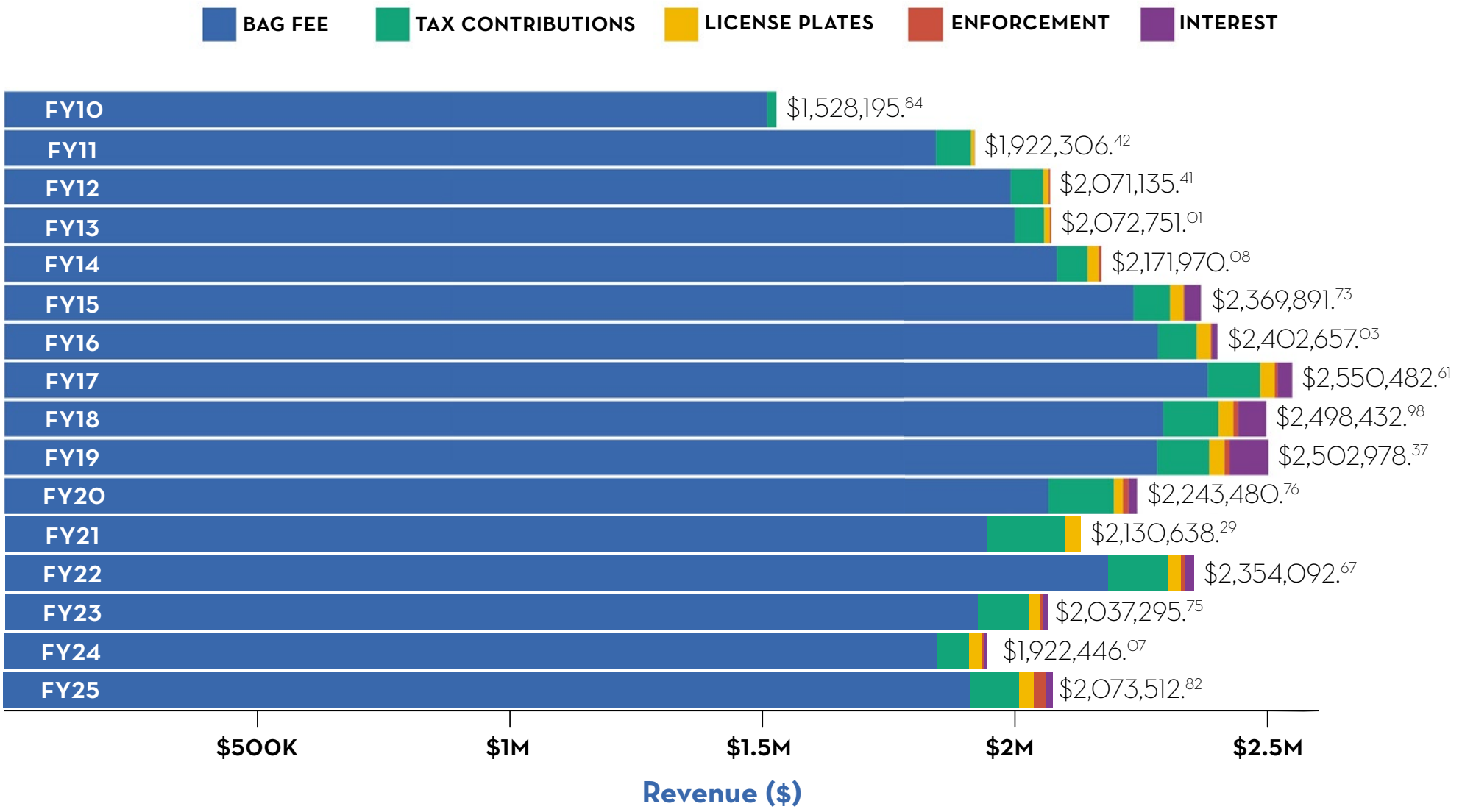


Figure 1: Total Bag Fund revenue for FYs 2010-2025, by source

In FY25, the Bag Fund saw a 7.9% increase compared to FY24. For a detailed breakdown of revenue by year and source, visit Appendix A.

The Bag Fund and Its Revenue

In addition to the fee, the Act established the Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fund ("Bag Fund"), a special-purpose revenue fund maintained by the Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) and administered by the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) to protect and clean the Anacostia River and other impaired local waterways. Since 2013, DOEE has published the annual Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fund Summary Report to share information about the revenue generated and activities supported by the Bag Fund. This report is for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), spanning October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025.

The Bag Fund receives revenue from four sources:

Bag Fees

The Act requires District businesses selling food or alcohol to charge a five-cent fee for each paper or plastic disposable bag distributed with any purchase, with a few exemptions. Of each five-cent fee, businesses are required to remit four cents to the Office of Tax and Revenue.* Remitted fees are deposited into the Bag Fund. **In FY25, regulated businesses remitted $1,952,037.25 in bag fees.**

Voluntary Tax Contributions

District residents can make voluntary contributions to Anacostia River restoration efforts on their individual income tax returns. Both the D-40 and D-40EZ tax forms have special line items for voluntary contributions to the Bag Fund. **In FY25, District residents contributed $84,869.90 to the Fund through voluntary tax contributions.**

Anacostia River License Plates

Since 2010, the Department of Motor Vehicles has offered commemorative Anacostia River license plates to District residents. Residents pay a $25 application fee and a $10 specialty tag display fee, paid annually upon renewal. A portion of proceeds from the license plates are deposited into the Fund. **In FY25, the Fund collected $22,727.30 from these license plate fees.**

Enforcement

To verify compliance with the Act, DOEE inspects approximately 550 businesses per year. Businesses receive a warning letter and compliance assistance upon their first observed violation. For subsequent violations, DOEE fines businesses between $100 and $800, depending on the number of previous violations. Fines are deposited into the Fund. **In FY25, the Fund collected $12,800 from enforcement.**

*If the business offers a rebate to customers who bring their own bag, they are instead required to remit three cents of every five-cent fee. As more customers bring reusable bags, such rebates are far less common than they used to be.

Activities Supported Through the Bag Fund

All spending from the Bag Fund is intended to contribute to cleaning and protecting the Anacostia River and other impaired waterways in the District. The Act's priorities and the activities to address them are outlined in Appendix B. Annual spending varies based on funds available and projects in progress.

Bag Fund Priority by Areas

Green Infrastructure	Installations on public and private property that utilize vegetation and other techniques to reduce stormwater runoff by mimicking the natural water cycle
Watershed Education and Access	Initiatives to educate students and broader community members about the District's watersheds and efforts to ensure equitable access to educational, recreational, and vocational opportunities
Trash Capture and Monitoring	Programs and installations designed to remove trash from District communities and waterways, as well as research and monitoring of plastics and other pollutants
Stream Restoration and Wildlife Conservation	Projects that improve and restore the health of District waterbodies to enhance streams, wildlife habitat, and the aquatic ecosystem
Outreach and Reusable Bag Distribution	Purchase and donation of reusable bags to District residents and organizations as well as other community-supported efforts
Enforcement and Fee Collection	Programs and personnel responsible for implementing and enforcing the Bag Fee and Bag Fund requirements
Program Administration	Expenses related to maintenance and administration of the Bag Fee program and Bag Fund

Table 1: FY25 Spending by Funding Category ($)	
Green Infrastructure	430,077.71
Watershed Education and Access	942,190.46
Trash Capture and Monitoring	100,000.00
Stream Restoration and Wildlife Conservation	14,752.35
Outreach and Reusable Bag Distribution	10,063.70
Enforcement and Fee Collection	52,635.47
Program Administration	303,343.68
Total FY25 Spending	**1,853,063.37**

Table 2: Total Spending by Fiscal Year ($)	
FY14	1,192,126.88
FY15	1,541,153.72
FY16	1,621,163.62
FY17	3,460,501.31
FY18	2,677,294.89
FY19	3,492,474.16
FY20	2,160,799.68
FY21	3,549,716.33
FY22	2,056,622.58
FY23	2,448,084.56
FY24	2,044,159.06
FY25	1,853,063.37

Programs and Activities Funded by the Anacostia River Clean-Up and Protection Fund

RiverSmart

RiverSmart is a suite of DOEE programs designed to reduce the stormwater runoff that pollutes local waterways before flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. The programs provide financial incentives for District property owners to install green infrastructure such as rain barrels, green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavers, shade trees, and more. These practices allow stormwater to stay onsite and soak into the ground, where natural filtration processes remove pollutants. Since 2009, RiverSmart programs have serviced over 26,000 residents throughout the District.

RiverSmart Homes offers financial and technical assistance for residential properties of up to four units to install one or more green infrastructure practices, depending on their property and lifestyle. In FY25, RiverSmart Homes issued $30,302.29 in rebates for rain gardens and installed 107 rain gardens and 310 BayScapes (native plantings).

In FY25, the Bag Fund also supported the Permeable Pavers and Re-Vegetation program, a component of RiverSmart Homes that provides rebates for District residents to replace impervious surfaces with vegetation or permeable pavers. The program issued $282,511 and completed 71 projects totaling 39,073 square feet.

Permeable pavers, rain gardens, and BayScapes significantly decrease erosion and stormwater runoff while increasing property value. They are an important tool in reducing pollution in local waterways while beautifying properties and neighborhoods.

RiverSmart Communities provides funding for low-impact development (LID) retrofits on nonprofit and faith-based properties. Once installed, entities are responsible for maintaining the installations and educating their communities about the impacts of stormwater, how LID practices reduce pollution, and related DOEE programs.

In FY 2025, DOEE partnered with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (The Alliance) to administer the program. The Alliance selected four entities to receive funding for their LID retrofit projects at the following locations:

- Atlantis Lodge, located at 4839 Meade St NE
- Capital Area Food Bank, located at 4900 Puerto Rico Avenue NE
- Lutheran Church of the Reformation, located at 212 East Capitol Street NE
- Tabernacle Baptist Church, located at 719 Division Ave NE.

DOEE anticipates those projects to be permitted and installed in FY 2026.

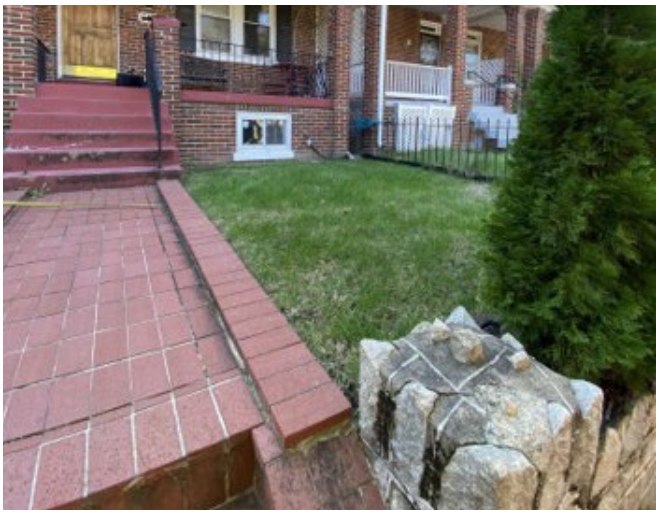


Figure 2 and 3: Before and after of a Bayscape installation installed at a rowhome in Ward 4.

Park Drive Gully and Stream Restoration Project

The Park Drive Stream Restoration Project restored two degraded streams along Park Drive in the Hillcrest neighborhood in Southeast. The two streams, Fort Davis and Texas Avenue, were restored using a step pool conveyance system style of stream restoration that raises the stream bed elevation and creates more area for stream flow to spread out and slow down. The pools are separated by strategically placed rock clusters (weirs and cascades) that allow for the stream to transition from higher elevations to lower elevations in a stable manner. The large pools created in the restoration project provide suitable planting conditions for emergent wetland plants and provide habitat for frogs. This restoration project will also help improve water quality conditions in the Anacostia River, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay. In FY25, the Bag Fund supported post-restoration site maintenance activities to ensure the restoration work functioned as designed.

The restored stream stabilized and restored 1,300 feet of degraded urban stream, while planting 147 large canopy trees, 44 small canopy trees, dozens of shrubs, and hundreds of emergent wetland plugs. Estimates show that this restoration will drastically reduce stream bank erosion and annually reduce the site's pollutant loads by 6,969 pounds for Total Nitrogen (TN), 325 pounds for Total Phosphorus (TP), and 1,892,155 pounds for Total Suspended Solids.

This project is the seventh DOEE stream restoration in the Anacostia River watershed. In total, DOEE has restored over 19,000 feet of streams that flow into the river over the last decade. This project at Park Drive was the first on National Park Service land and is a precursor to the upcoming Fort Dupont Stream Restoration Project, which will restore over 18,000 feet of degraded urban stream.

Figure 4: A vegetated wetland complex thrives along the banks and floodplain benches along the Fort Davis tributary as part of the Park Drive Stream Restoration Project.

Figure 5: The Fort Davis stream flows over a constructed rifle at the Park Drive Stream Restoration site.

Figure 6: A series of cascades were constructed to safely convey base and storm flows in the Texas Avenue Tributary section of the Park Drive Stream Restoration Project.

Anacostia River Corridor Restoration Plan

In FY25, the Bag Fund supported the completion of the District's Anacostia River Corridor Restoration Plan (ARCRP), a roadmap to guide the integration of the corridor's ecological restoration with public access and amenities. ARCRP builds on decades of efforts to restore the river corridor while addressing historical inequities and environmental degradation. The river's corridor is defined as the tidal section of the Anacostia River within the District's borders, reaching from the river channel to the upland edge of the 500-year floodplain.

This plan fulfills the need for a holistic approach to restore and enhance the river by offering a clear list of priorities and strategies. The planning process took place from 2021 to 2024, with robust stakeholder engagement including District residents, community groups, visitors, non-governmental organizations, and local and federal agencies. The final report was released early in FY25.

Additionally, the **Anacostia Seawall Study** was completed as part of ARCRP. This undertaking studied the structural and ecological conditions of the 16+ miles of the Anacostia Seawall. This data was combined to create an assessment tool to identify which sections of seawall are a priority for preservation or removal. The tool is available for the public to use via the District's Geographic Information System (GIS) platform. It has proved useful in subsequent policy deliberations and discussions by public bodies like the District Waterways Advisory Commission.

Aquatic Resources Education Center

In FY25, the Bag Fund supported educational programs at the Aquatic Resources Education Center (AREC), a multi-use environmental education center in Anacostia Park. Run by DOEE, AREC currently exhibits more than 40 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates found in the District and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In FY25, AREC reached 6,608 individuals through:

- K-12 field trips, where students learn about watershed ecology, animal adaptations, wildlife conservation, and pollution prevention. Some students also had opportunities to participate in boat tours on the Anacostia River.
- Community fishing programs, held at four locations throughout the District: Kingman Island, Anacostia Park, Diamond Teague Park, and the Tidal Basin. The program provides equipment and instruction for new anglers learning how to fish.
- Teacher professional development workshops, offered free of charge by Project WILD four times a year. These workshops are part of a national training and certification program dedicated to providing educators with resources to teach environmental education, including wildlife conservation, to their students.
- Community outreach and engagement activities.

Figure 7: The Aquatic Resource Education Center partners with Urban Adventure Squad to give a tour to their Nature Near School program in Ward 8 .

Figure 8: A young angler shows off his catch, a Pumpkinseed, at a community fishing event at Kingman Island in Ward 7.

Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs)

DOEE worked with nonprofit partners to create Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for District students during the 2024-2025 school year. These experiences vary from day-long to multi-day programs that teach students about their local watershed and the Chesapeake Bay through classroom lessons, field experiences, action projects, and reflection activities. The Bag Fund supports two MWEE programs: the Overnight MWEE and the Nature Near Schools MWEE.

DOEE's Overnight MWEE is a three-day, two-night immersive program for fifth grade students. Students participate in hands-on activities such as water quality monitoring, habitat hikes, and teambuilding. During the reporting period, grantees engaged 742 fifth-graders from 27 schools.

Figure 9: Students from Malcolm X Elementary in Ward 8 participating in a macro-invertebrate lesson during an overnight program with the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Nature Near Schools

DOEE's Nature Near Schools (NNS) MWEE is a fourth-grade program that continued working with partners to offer students the opportunity to learn about their local watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay while immersed in their local, school-based environment. During the reporting period, DOEE's grantee, Casey Trees, provided MWEE programming through NNS at schoolyards and local field trips to approximately 28 schools, interacting with 1,138 students and 58 teachers. The students learned about topics including watershed health, air quality, and food webs. As part of the MWEE experience, the students worked on taking individual action by creating action projects including:

- Native tree plantings
- Schoolyard cleanups
- Letters to Councilmembers about trash problems around their schoolyards and communities.

Program evaluations showed that students felt more comfortable in nature and learning outdoors over the course of the program.

Figure 10: Students from Smothers Elementary School in Ward 7 participate in a Nature Near Schools water quality activity with the Anacostia Watershed Society.

Kingman and Heritage Islands Restoration Plan

Kingman and Heritage Islands receive close to 100,000 visitors annually. Over the past three decades, invasive species have become ecologically destructive, making their removal essential to protecting the health of the Islands.

During FY25, DOEE:

- Planted 36,500 native tree shrubs and perennials
- Seeded 37 acres with native seed where invasives had previously been removed
- Developed a detailed maintenance plan.

The maintenance plan includes a detailed calendar outlining which invasive species to remove and when, along with maps identifying areas where invasive populations are most problematic. It also provides a specific "menu" of plants to replant and reseed based on the various conditions and locations developed through the plan. Since the end of FY25, DOEE has been implementing this roadmap to protect and sustain the investment made in the restoration.

An additional benefit of the project is the improved visitor experience. Visitors can now see the Anacostia River from most of the trails. Before invasive species were removed, visitors standing just 70 feet from the water often could not see the river because of the overgrowth of thick invasive plants that obstructed sightlines. Restoring the native ecosystem has made the river visible from most trail locations while creating more space for native vegetation to thrive.

Figure 11:This trail at the south end of Kingman Island was dominated by invasive bush honeysuckle, an aggressive non-native shrub that causes widespread ecological harm. Some of it had been there for an estimated three decades! The area has been cleared of this invasive species and it is now high terrace floodplain forest, boasting over 35 different native plant species.

Figure 12: During Kingman Friends and Family Day in September 2025, grantees Resource Environmental Solutions and Sarver Ecological led a planting activity on the island. They worked with volunteers and children to plant 17 different upland meadow species, planting a total of 400 individual plants that day.

Trash Traps

In FY25, the Bag Fund supported maintenance of eight trash traps that collectively removed more than 102,000 pounds of trash and debris from District waterbodies since their respective installations. The District maintains a network of Bandalong trash traps, booms, and cages, all of which continue to play vital roles in intercepting floating debris before entering the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.

During FY25, these devices captured 4,199 pounds of trash, supported by 118 volunteers who contributed approximately 250 service hours. These efforts not only reduced the volume of litter reaching local waterways but also contributed valuable data to support ongoing compliance with the Anacostia Trash Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The traps are an effective, low-impact tool that adapts to changing water levels to safely capture debris without disrupting aquatic ecosystems.

Figure 13, 14 and 15: This trash trap is located at Nash Run, a small tributary that carries stormwater and, unfortunately, trash into the Kenilworth Marsh and Anacostia River. It has been in place for 10 years now, with its original installation and ongoing maintenance funded by the Bag Law. Maintenance includes not only cleaning out the trap, but also sorting and categorizing to have better data on its composition. As one can see from the photos, single-use plastic bottles make up a significant portion of the collected trash.

Kingman Friends and Family Day

Kingman Island Friends and Family Day is an annual DOEE event on Kingman and Heritage Islands, the District's first state conservation area. This year was the fifth consecutive year of the family-friendly fall event that engages community members in a variety of outdoor activities. In 2025, about 400 community members joined DOEE and nonprofit partners for activities including nature exploration, educational boat tours, paddle cleanups, native plantings, invasive plant removals, a children's clothing swap, tree and bird walks, arts and crafts, live music, and more.

Figure 16: District youth engage in art outdoors at the 5th Annual Kingman Island Friends and Family Day in Ward 7.

Figure 17: District residents explore Kingman Lake by kayak at the 5th Annual Kingman Island Friends and Family Day in Ward 7.

Watershed Partners Meeting

In FY25, DOEE hosted two Watershed Partners Meetings as part of a continuing commitment under the Chesapeake Implementation Plan to bring watershed stakeholders together to discuss priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

In January 2025, the meeting was focused on trash data collection, with about 40 community members in attendance. While there is generally no cost associated with these gatherings, for this meeting the Bag Fund supported printing large maps and other materials for a more informative and interactive session.

In September 2025, DOEE returned to a previous format of a general report-out meeting, with different programs sharing relevant updates. There was also an in-depth discussion about the projected budget, which was of great interest to the approximately 50 attendees.

Reusable Bag Distribution

In FY25, twelve District-based nonprofits and service organizations requested 3,400 reusable bags from DOEE to support their food distributions and other services for underserved District residents. DOEE provided reusable bags to the following partners:

Covenant House

Martha's Table

Brighter Day Ministries

Pope Francis Outreach Center

DC Greens

UDC Food Pantry

Project Giveback

Thrive DC

Ward 8 Woods

We Are Family

DC Central Kitchen

Southwest Business Improvement District

Enforcement Compliance Rates

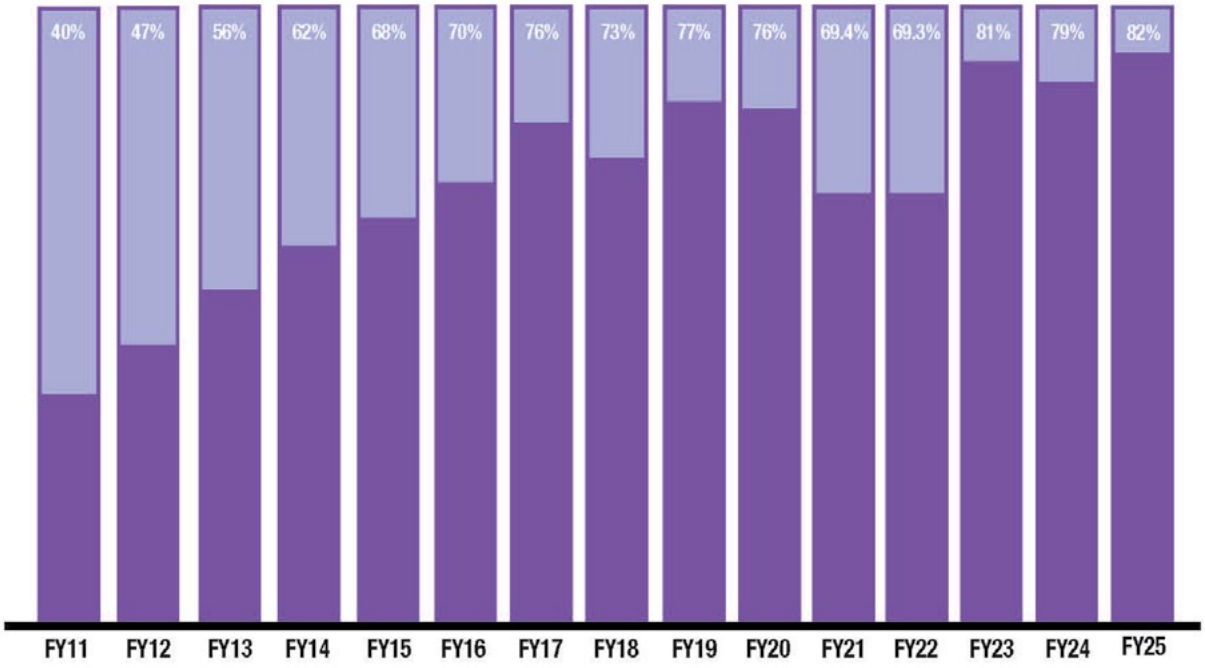


Figure 18: Enforcement and Fee Collection

To ensure compliance with the Act, in FY25, DOEE conducted 572 inspections of regulated businesses, finding 43 Notices of Violation (NOV) and 59 Notices of Infraction (NOI). The FY25 compliance rate was 82%, a slight increase from the FY24 compliance rate of 79%.

Program Administration

Bag Fund revenues support administrative expenses associated with the program, such as equipment, printing and reproduction, and overhead expenses. Bag Fund revenues also support processing the fees and other revenue sources and transferring them to the Bag Fund.

Appendix A: Bag Fund Revenue by Year and Source

Fiscal Year	Fees	Tax Contributions	License Plates	Enforcement	Interest	TOTALS by YEAR
FY10	$1,510,088.35	$18,107.49	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,528,195.84
FY11	$1,845,313.25	$69,849.37	$6,493.80	$650.00	$0.00	$1,922,306.42
FY12	$1,993,183.22	$64,117.91	$10,670.15	$3,164.13	$0.00	$2,071,135.41
FY13	$2,001,575.50	$58,120.21	$10,753.05	$2,302.25	$0.00	$2,072,751.01
FY14	$2,084,613.59	$60,853.69	$21,935.50	$4,567.30	$0.00	$2,171,970.08
FY15	$2,236,275.44	$72,435.77	$26,414.45	$2,478.43	$32,287.64	$2,369,891.73
FY16	$2,284,104.15	$76,906.63	$28,086.95	$2,451.51	$11,107.79	$2,402,657.03
FY17	$2,382,747.11	$104,331.65	$28,750.70	$5,230.11	$29,423.04	$2,550,482.61
FY18	$2,294,977.50	$109,646.07	$29,288.80	$9,200.00	$55,320.61	$2,498,432.98
FY19	$2,282,879.44	$103,541.59	$29,284.35	$10,594.60	$76,678.39	$2,502,978.37
FY20	$2,068,208.73	$129,567.64	$17,890.75	$11,200.00	$16,613.64	$2,243,480.76
FY21	$1,946,105.40	$157,507.00	$25,617.50	$700.00*	$708.39**	$2,130,638.29
FY22	$2,184,913.91	$119,698.03	$23,284.60	$6,112.00	$20,084.13	$2,354,092.67
FY23	$1,907,867.86	$104,590.28	$22,425.50	$2,412.11	$2,240.08	$2,037,295.75
FY24	$1,783,172.25	$101,166.30	$20,353.55	$14,300.01	$3,453.96	$1,922,466.07
FY25	$1,952,037.25	$84,869.90	$22,727.30	$12,800.00	$1,078.37	$2,073,512.82
TOTALS by SOURCE:	**$32,758,062.95**	**$1,435,309.53**	**$323,976.95**	**$88,162.45**	**$248,996.04**	
					TOTAL REVENUE:	**$34,854,507.92**

***The low FY21 enforcement revenue is a result of suspension of routine inspections between October 2020-June 2021**
**** The low FY21 interest is a result of a lower interest rate for the year. The FY21 interest rate was 0.05% while FY17-FY20 interest rates ranged from 0.75%-2.30%.**

Appendix B: Act Priorities Addressed by Fund-Supported Activities

Act Priority/Fund-Supported Activity	Green Infrastructure	Watershed Education and Access	Trash Capture and Monitoring	Stream Restoration and Wildlife Conservation	Outreach & Reusable Bag Distribution	Enforcement and Fee Collection	Program Administration
A public education campaign to educate residents, businesses, and tourists about the impact of trash on the District's environmental health		X	X		X	X	
Providing reusable carryout bags to District residents, with priority distribution to seniors and low-income residents					X		
Purchasing and installing equipment, such as storm drain screens and trash traps, designed to minimize trash pollution that enters waterways through storm drains		X	X	X			
Creating youth-oriented water resource and water pollution educational campaigns for students at the District public and charter schools		X					
Monitoring and recording pollution indices		X	X				
Preserving or enhancing water quality and fishery or wildlife habitat	X	X	X	X	X		
Promoting conservation programs, including programs for wildlife and endangered species		X		X			
Purchasing and installing signs and equipment designed to minimize trash pollution, including anti- littering signs to be installed in areas where littering would impact the Anacostia River, recycling containers, and covered trash receptacles		X	X	X	X		
Restoring and enhancing wetlands and green infrastructure to protect the health of the watershed and restore the aquatic and land resources of its watershed	X	X	X	X			
Funding community cleanup events and other activities that reduce trash, such as increased litter collection		X	X		X		
Funding a circuit rider program with neighboring jurisdictions to focus river and tributary clean-up efforts upstream		X	X				
Supporting vocational and job training experiences in environmental and sustainable professions that enhance the health of the watershed	X	X					
Maintaining a public website that educates District residents on the progress of clean-up efforts							X
Paying for the administration of this program							X

The Bag Fund is managed by DOEE's Natural Resources Administration. For more information about implementation of the Act, visit ***doee.dc.gov/bags***.

Additional questions should be directed to the Compliance Assistance and Policy Team at: ***CAPTeam@dc.gov***.

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