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Litter law delayed

By [SHAWN LOGAN](#), SUN MEDIA

Chronic litterbugs will have at least a month-long reprieve to toss trash and discard cigarettes without fear of heavy fines backed by city council yesterday.

In a narrow 8-7 vote, aldermen agreed to impose new fines to target Calgarians who treat city streets as a trash bin, throw garbage from their cars or flick cigarette butts on the ground.

But the new fines will have to wait until September after Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart refused to give the unanimous consent of council needed to see the bylaw come into force immediately.

She said the city's community standards bylaw is more than enough to pursue unrepentant litterbugs and creating a regime of huge, unenforceable fines will do little to solve the problem.

"I was just trying to delay the inevitable -- the amount of social engineering that we're getting into down here at city hall is ridiculous," she said.

"The next thing we're going to hear is they want a bigger budget for not only pesticide police but butt police now."

A city committee decided earlier this month to boost proposed littering fines to send a tougher message to the untidy masses, setting levies of \$500 for littering, \$750 for tossing trash from vehicles and \$1,000 for throwing burning materials, particularly cigarettes, on city streets.

Those fines had originally been proposed to range from \$300 to \$750. Council will still have an opportunity to overturn the bylaw fines in September when they next meet but the plan's opponents will need one more vote to see the plan quashed.

Ald. Druh Farrell said city streets are becoming overrun with carelessly strewn garbage and the city needs to get tough on those who don't respect public and private spaces.

"When you're living in a city of a million, there are certain rules you have to follow to make it habitable," she said.

"I'm getting cranky about this issue, so I think it was important to send an even stronger message.



"Littering is becoming an increasingly expensive issue for the city to deal with."

She discounted suggestions the bylaw would be unenforceable, noting the same thing was said about the city's smoking bylaw and now there are only a handful of tickets ever issued.