

## US city faces toilet paper crisis

The capital of the US state of New Jersey faces running out of toilet paper following a dispute over costs.

Trenton's city council has refused to approve a \$42,000 (£26,855) contract for paper products after balking at its \$4,000 charge for paper cups. The toilet paper, along with other supplies, is to be used in government buildings such as city hall. Removing the cups from the contract has not allayed the council's suspicions over the bidding process. One council member told Bloomberg News that "we're not going to send out any blank cheques". George Muschal said the council did not want to approve Mayor Tony Mack's decision to include \$4,000 of paper cups designed for hot drinks, citing unreasonably high costs for the items. It voted down the contract three separate times, most recently in January.

According to reports, the paper cups were removed without a new bidding process. Council members have also questioned why the city did not solicit bids from Trenton-based suppliers. Fellow council member Kathy McBride, who voted for the contract during the January vote, said that move further raised the council's suspicions. "There's enough blame to go around on both sides," she said. "I always have to function with one goal in mind, and that's I represent the residents of the city." However, Ms McBride told the Times of Trenton that the city council still had an obligation to keep the city running. Mayor Mack, who began his term in 2010, almost faced a recall election in 2011, following questions about his hiring practices. The city has lost seven business administrators since the beginning of his term, including one who resigned pending an investigation of allegedly mishandling campaign money, and one who resigned before his first day of work.