

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on July 8, 2003  
Registration No. 333-\_\_\_\_\_

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-8

REGISTRATION STATEMENT  
UNDER  
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC.  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

VIRGINIA  
(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)

(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)  
54-1387365

500 VOLVO PARKWAY  
CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA 23320  
(757) 321-5000  
(Address and telephone number of  
registrant's principal executive offices)

DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC.  
2003 EQUITY INCENTIVE PLAN  
(Full title of the plan)

FREDERICK C. COBLE  
DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC.  
500 VOLVO PARKWAY  
CHESAPEAKE, VA 23320  
(757) 321-5000  
(Name, address and telephone number  
of agent for service)

with a copy to:  
WILLIAM A. OLD, JR.  
JOHN S. MITCHELL, JR.  
HOFHEIMER NUSBAUM, P.C.  
999 WATERSIDE DRIVE, SUITE 1700  
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23510  
(757) 622-3366

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of securities to be registered	Amount to be registered (1)	Proposed maximum offering price per share	Proposed maximum aggregate offering price	Amount of registration fee
Common stock (par value \$.01)	6,000,000 (2)	\$31.85 (3)	\$191,100,000	\$15,459.99 (3)

- (1) Also includes such indeterminate number of additional shares which may be offered and issued to prevent dilution from stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions pursuant to the Plan.
- (2) Represents shares offered or to be offered under the Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. 2003 Equity Incentive Plan approved by Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. Board of Directors on March 17, 2003 and by its shareholders on June 19, 2003.
- (3) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(h)(1) based upon the average of the reported high and low sales prices for a share of Common Stock on July 1, 2003 as reported on the Nasdaq National Market.

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This Registration Statement includes a Total of 9 Pages.  
Exhibit Index on Page 9.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. The Company hereby files this Registration Statement on Form S-8 with the Commission to register 6,000,000 shares of Common Stock, \$.01 par value, offered or to be offered to participants under the 2003 Equity Incentive Plan (“Plan”) from time to time at prices determined by a committee of the Company’s Board of Directors. This Registration Statement also covers such indeterminate number of additional shares which may be offered and issued pursuant to the Plan to prevent dilution resulting from stock splits, stock dividends, recapitalizations or similar transactions.

2. Under the terms of the Plan, shares of Common Stock formerly available for issuance (“Old Plan Shares”) under the Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. Stock Incentive Plan, as amended (which has been terminated) have become available for issuance under the Plan. The Old Plan Shares were previously registered on the Company’s Registration Statements on Form S-8, Registration Nos. 33-92812, 333-38735, and 333- 41248, as amended. Such Registration Statements are incorporated herein by reference.

## PART II

### INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

#### ITEM 3. INCORPORATION OF DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The following documents filed with the Commission by the Company pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "1934 Act"), (Commission 1934 Act File No. 0-25464) are incorporated by reference herein:

- (1) The Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002.
- (2) The Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended May 3, 2003.
- (3) The Registrant's Current Reports on Form 8-K dated April 7, May 8, May 20, May 29, June 2, June 19, June 30, and July 7, 2003.
- (4) All documents filed with the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the 1934 Act subsequent to the date hereof and prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment which indicates that all securities offered herein have been sold or which deregisters all securities then remaining unsold.
- (5) The description of the Registrant's Common Stock contained in the Registrant's 1934 Act registration statement on Form 8-a dated March 6, 1995, filed with the Commission pursuant to Section 12 of the 1934 Act, including any amendment thereto or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

Any statement contained herein or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes hereof or of the related prospectus to the extent that a statement contained herein or in any other subsequently filed document which is also incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this Registration Statement.

#### ITEM 4. DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES

Not applicable, see Item 3(5) above.

#### ITEM 5. INTERESTS OF NAMED EXPERTS AND COUNSEL

Not applicable.

ITEM 6. INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

The information required by this item is hereby incorporated herein by this reference to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 33-88502), as amended, initially filed with the Commission on January 13, 1995.

ITEM 7. EXEMPTION FROM REGISTRATION CLAIMED

Not Applicable.

ITEM 8. EXHIBITS

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
*4.1	Third Restated Articles of Incorporation, as amended (See to Exhibit 3.1 to the Company's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ending June 30, 1996, which is incorporated herein by this reference).
*4.2	Second Restated Bylaws (See Exhibit 3.2 to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-1 (Registration No. 33- 88502), as amended (the "1995 Registration Statement"), initially filed with the Commission on January 13, 1995, which is incorporated herein by this reference).
*4.3	Form of Common Stock Certificate (See Exhibit 4.5 to the 1995 Registration Statement, which is incorporated herein by this reference).
**4.4	Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. 2003 Equity Incentive Plan (filed herewith).
**5.1	Opinion of Hofheimer Nusbaum, P.C. regarding legality of shares being issued (filed herewith)
**23.1	Consent of Independent Auditors (filed herewith).
**23.2	Consent of Counsel (See Exhibit 5.1).
**24.1	Power of Attorney (See Signature Page).

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\* Previously filed as an exhibit to the referenced filing, which is herein incorporated by reference.

\*\* Filed herewith

## ITEM 9. UNDERTAKINGS

(a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:

(i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;

(ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of this Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in this Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high and of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in this Registration Statement; and

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in this Registration Statement or any material change to such information in this Registration Statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) do not apply if the registration statement is on Form S-3, Form S-8 or Form F-3, and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference into this Registration Statement;

(2) That for the purpose of determining any liability under the 1933 Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof; and

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the Registrant's Annual Report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (and where applicable, each filing of the Plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new Registration Statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the 1933 Act may be permitted to directors, officers or controlling persons of the Registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the Registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the 1933 Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the Registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the Registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the Registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the 1933 Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Company certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Chesapeake, Commonwealth of Virginia, on the 8th day of July, 2003.

DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC.

By /s/ Macon F. Brock, Jr.  
-----  
Macon F. Brock, Jr.  
Chairman; Chief Executive Officer

DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC.

By /s/ Frederick C. Coble  
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Frederick C. Coble  
Chief Financial Officer

The registrant and each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Macon F. Brock, Jr. and Frederick C. Coble named in this Registration statement, and each of them, his, her or its true and lawful attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power of substitution and resubstitution, for him, her or it and in his, her, or its name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign and file any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to the Registration Statement, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents, and each of them, full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite or necessary to be done in and about the premises, as fully to all intents and purposes as he, she, or it might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents or any of them, or their or his substitute or substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

Signature	Title	Date
<u>/s/ Macon F. Brock, Jr.</u> Macon F. Brock, Jr.	Chairman of the Board; Chief Executive Officer; Director	July 8, 2003
<u>/s/ H. Ray Compton</u> H. Ray Compton	Director	July 2, 2003
<u>/s/ Richard Lesser</u> Richard Lesser	Director	July 1, 2003
<u>/s/ John F. Megrue</u> John F. Megrue	Vice Chairman; Director	July 3, 2003
<u>/s/ J. Douglas Perry</u> J. Douglas Perry	Director	July 2, 2003
<u>/s/ Thomas A. Saunders, III</u> Thomas A. Saunders, III	Director	July 2, 2003
<u>/s/ Eileen Scott</u> Eileen Scott	Director	July 1, 2003
<u>/s/ Alan L. Wurtzel</u> Alan L. Wurtzel	Director	July 1, 2003

## INDEX TO EXHIBITS

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**23.1	Consent of Independent Auditors (filed herewith).
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\*\* Filed herewith

## EXHIBIT 4.4

### DOLLAR TREE STORES, INC. 2003 EQUITY INCENTIVE PLAN

#### ARTICLE I GENERAL

Section 1.1. PURPOSE. The Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. 2003 Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan") has been established by Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. (the "Company") to (i) attract and retain persons eligible to participate in the Plan; (ii) motivate Participants, by means of appropriate incentives, to achieve long-range goals; (iii) provide incentive compensation opportunities that are competitive with those of other similar companies; and (iv) further identify Participants' interests with those of the Company's other shareholders through compensation that is based on the Company's common stock; and thereby promote the long-term financial interest of the Company and the Subsidiaries, including the growth in value of the Company's equity and enhancement of long-term shareholder return.

Section 1.2. PARTICIPATION. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Plan, the Committee shall determine and designate, from time to time, from among the Eligible Recipients (including transferees of Eligible Recipients to the extent the transfer is permitted by the Plan and the applicable Award Agreement), those persons who will be granted one or more Awards under the Plan, and thereby become "Participants" in the Plan.

Section 1.3. OPERATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND DEFINITIONS. The operation and administration of the Plan, including the Awards made under the Plan, shall be subject to the provisions of Article 4 (relating to operation and administration). Capitalized terms in the Plan shall be defined as set forth in the Plan (including the definition provisions of Section 8 of the Plan).

#### ARTICLE 2 OPTIONS AND SARS

##### Section 2.1. DEFINITIONS.

(a) The grant of an "Option" entitles the Participant to purchase shares of Stock at an Exercise Price established by the Committee. Any Option granted under this Article 2 may be either an incentive stock option (an "ISO") or a nonqualified option (an "NQO"), as determined in the discretion of the Committee. An "ISO" is an Option that is intended to satisfy the requirements applicable to an "incentive stock option" described in section 422(b) of the Code. An "NQO" is an Option that is not intended to be an "incentive stock

option" as that term is described in section 422(b) of the Code.

(b) A stock appreciation right (an "SAR") entitles the Participant to receive, in cash or Stock (as determined in accordance with Section 2.5), value equal to (or otherwise based on) the excess of: (a) the Fair Market Value of a specified number of shares of Stock at the time of exercise; over (b) an Exercise Price established by the Committee. The Committee may limit the amount that can be received when an SAR is exercised.

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Section 2.2. EXERCISE PRICE. The "Exercise Price" of each Option and SAR granted under this Article 2 shall be established by the Committee or shall be determined by a method established by the Committee at the time the Option or SAR is granted; except that the Exercise Price shall not be less than 100% of the Fair Market Value of a share of Stock on the date of grant (or, if greater, the par value of a share of Stock). Repricing of Options and SAR Awards granted under this Article 2 after the date of grant shall not be permitted.

Section 2.3. EXERCISE. An Option and an SAR shall be exercisable in accordance with such terms and conditions and during such periods as may be established by the Committee.

Section 2.4. PAYMENT OF OPTION EXERCISE PRICE. The payment of the Exercise Price of an Option granted under this Article 2 shall be subject to the following:

(a) Subject to the following provisions of this Section 2.4, the full Exercise Price for shares of Stock purchased upon the exercise of any Option shall be paid at the time of such exercise (except that, in the case of an exercise arrangement approved by the Committee and described in paragraph 2.4(c), payment may be made as soon as practicable after the exercise).

(b) The Exercise Price shall be payable in cash or by tendering, by either actual delivery of shares or by attestation, already-owned shares of Stock acceptable to the Committee, and valued at Fair Market Value as of the day of exercise, or in any combination thereof, as determined by the Committee.

(c) The Committee may permit a Participant to elect to pay the Exercise Price upon the exercise of an Option by irrevocably authorizing a third party to sell shares of Stock (or a sufficient portion of the shares) acquired upon exercise of the Option and remit to the Company a sufficient portion of the sale proceeds to pay the entire Exercise Price and any tax withholding resulting from such exercise.

Section 2.5. SETTLEMENT OF AWARD. Settlement of Options and SARs is subject to Section 4.7.

ARTICLE 3  
OTHER STOCK AWARDS

Section 3.1. DEFINITIONS.

(a) A "Stock Unit" Award is the grant of a right to receive shares of Stock in the future.

(b) A "Performance Share" Award is a grant of a right to receive shares of Stock or Stock Units which is contingent on the achievement of performance or other objectives during a specified period.

(c) A "Performance Unit" Award is a grant of a right to receive a designated dollar value amount of Stock which is contingent on the achievement of performance or other

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objectives during a specified period.

(d) A "Restricted Stock" Award is a grant of shares of Stock, and a "Restricted Stock Unit" Award is the grant of a right to receive shares of Stock in the future, with such shares of Stock or right to future delivery of such shares of Stock subject to a risk of forfeiture or other restrictions that will lapse upon the achievement of one or more goals relating to completion of service by the Participant, or achievement of performance or other objectives, as determined by the Committee.

Section 3.2. RESTRICTIONS ON AWARDS. Each Stock Unit Award, Restricted Stock Award, Restricted Stock Unit Award, Performance Share Award, and Performance Unit Award shall be subject to the following:

(a) Any such Award shall be subject to such conditions, restrictions and contingencies as the Committee shall determine.

(b) The Committee may designate whether any such Award being granted to any Participant is intended to be "performance-based compensation" as that term is used in section 162(m) of the Code. Any such Awards designated as intended to be "performance-based compensation" shall be conditioned on the achievement of one or more performance measures, to the extent required by Code section 162(m). The performance measures that may be used by the Committee for such Awards shall be based on the attainment of any performance goals, as selected by the Committee, that are related to profits, profit growth,

profit-related return ratios, cash flow or shareholder returns, where such goals may be stated in absolute terms or relative to comparison companies or indices to be achieved during a period of time. For Awards under this Article 3 intended to be "performance-based compensation," the grant of the Awards and the establishment of the Performance Measures shall be made during the period required under Code section 162(m).

#### ARTICLE 4 OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Section 4.1. EFFECTIVE DATE. Subject to the approval of the shareholders of the Company at the Company's 2003 annual meeting of its shareholders, the Plan shall be effective as of July 1, 2003 (the "Effective Date"). The Plan shall be unlimited in duration and, in the event of Plan termination, shall remain in effect as long as any Awards under it are outstanding; provided, however, that no Awards may be granted under the Plan after the ten year anniversary of the Effective Date (except for Awards granted pursuant to commitments entered into prior to such ten-year anniversary).

Section 4.2. SHARES SUBJECT TO PLAN. The shares of Stock for which Awards may be granted under the Plan shall be subject to the following:

(a) The shares of Stock with respect to which Awards may be made under the Plan shall be shares currently authorized but unissued or currently held or subsequently acquired by the Company as treasury shares, including shares purchased in the open market or in private transactions.

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(b) Subject to the following provisions of this Section 4.2, the maximum number of shares of Stock that may be delivered to Participants and their beneficiaries under the Plan shall be equal to the sum of: (i) six million (6,000,000) shares of Stock; and (ii) any shares of Stock available for future awards under any prior stock option or incentive plan of the Company (the "Prior Plans") as of the Effective Date; and (iii) any shares of Stock that are represented by awards granted under any Prior Plans which are forfeited, expire or are canceled without delivery of shares of Stock or which result in the forfeiture of the shares of Stock back to the Company.

(c) To the extent provided by the Committee, any Award may be settled in cash rather than Stock. To the extent any shares of Stock covered by an Award are not delivered to a Participant or beneficiary because the Award is forfeited or canceled, or the shares of Stock are not delivered because the Award is settled in cash or used to satisfy the applicable tax withholding obligation, such shares shall not be deemed to have been delivered for purposes of determining the maximum number of shares of Stock available for delivery under the Plan.

(d) If the exercise price of any stock option granted under the Plan or any Prior Plan is satisfied by tendering shares of Stock to the Company (by either actual delivery or by attestation), only the number of shares of Stock issued net of the shares of Stock tendered shall be deemed delivered for purposes of determining the maximum number of shares of Stock available for delivery under the Plan.

(e) Subject to paragraph 4.2(f), the following additional maximums are imposed under the Plan.

(i) The maximum number of shares of Stock that may be issued by Options intended to be ISOs shall be three hundred thousand (300,000) shares.

(ii) The maximum number of shares that may be covered by Awards granted to any one individual pursuant to Article 2 (relating to Options and SARs) shall be sixty thousand (60,000) shares during any one calendar year period. If an Option is in tandem with an SAR, such that the exercise of the Option or SAR with respect to a share of Stock cancels the tandem SAR or Option right, respectively, with respect to such share, the tandem Option and SAR rights with respect to each share of Stock shall be counted as covering but one share of Stock for purposes of applying the limitations of this paragraph (ii).

(iii) The maximum number of shares of Stock that may be issued in conjunction with Awards granted pursuant to Article 3 (relating to Other Stock Awards) shall be one million (1,000,000) shares.

(iv) For Stock Unit Awards, Restricted Stock Awards, Restricted Stock Unit Awards and Performance Share Awards that are intended to

be "performance-based compensation" (as that term is used for purposes of Code section 162(m)), no more than thirty thousand (30,000) shares of Stock may be subject to such Awards granted to any one individual during any one calendar year period. If, after shares have been earned, the delivery is deferred, any additional shares attributable to dividends during the deferral period shall be disregarded.

(v) For Performance Unit Awards that are intended to be  
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"performance-based compensation" (as that term is used for purposes of Code section 162(m)), no more than \$150,000 may be subject to such Awards granted to any one individual during any one calendar year period. If, after amounts have been earned with respect to Performance Unit Awards, the delivery of such amounts is deferred, any additional amounts attributable to earnings during the deferral period shall be disregarded.

(f) In the event of a corporate transaction involving the Company (including, without limitation, any stock dividend, stock split, extraordinary cash dividend, recapitalization, reorganization, merger, consolidation, split up, spin off, combination or exchange of shares), the Committee may adjust Awards to preserve the benefits or potential benefits of the Awards. Action by the Committee may include: (i) adjustment of the number and kind of shares which may be delivered under the Plan; (ii) adjustment of the number and kind of shares subject to outstanding Awards; (iii) adjustment of the Exercise Price of outstanding Options and SARs; and (iv) any other adjustments that the Committee determines to be equitable.

Section 4.3. GENERAL RESTRICTIONS. Delivery of shares of Stock or other amounts under the Plan shall be subject to the following:

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of the Plan, the Company shall have no liability to deliver any shares of Stock under the Plan or make any other distribution of benefits under the Plan unless such delivery or distribution would comply with all applicable laws (including, without limitation, the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933), and the applicable requirements of any securities exchange or similar entity.

(b) To the extent that the Plan provides for issuance of stock certificates to reflect the issuance of shares of Stock, the issuance may be effected on a non-certificated basis, to the extent not prohibited by applicable law or the applicable rules of any stock exchange.

Section 4.4. TAX WITHHOLDING. All distributions under the Plan are subject to withholding of all applicable taxes, and the Committee may condition the delivery of any shares or other benefits under the Plan on satisfaction of the

applicable withholding obligations. The Committee, in its discretion, and subject to such requirements as the Committee may impose prior to the occurrence of such withholding, may permit such withholding obligations to be satisfied through cash payment by the Participant, through the surrender of shares of Stock which the Participant already owns, or through the surrender of shares of Stock to which the Participant is otherwise entitled under the Plan.

Section 4.5. GRANT AND USE OF AWARDS. In the discretion of the Committee, a Participant may be granted any Award permitted under the provisions of the Plan, and more than one Award may be granted to a Participant. Awards may be granted as alternatives to or replacement of awards granted or outstanding under the Plan, or any other plan or arrangement of the Company or a Subsidiary (including a plan or arrangement of a business or entity, all or a portion of which is acquired by the Company or a Subsidiary). Subject to the overall limitation on the number of shares of Stock that may be delivered under the Plan, the Committee may use available shares of Stock as the form of payment for compensation, grants or rights earned or due under any other compensation plans or arrangements of the Company or a Subsidiary, including the plans and arrangements of the Company or a Subsidiary assumed in business combinations.  
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Section 4.6. DIVIDENDS AND DIVIDEND EQUIVALENTS. An Award (including without limitation an Option or SAR Award) may provide the Participant with the right to receive dividend payments or dividend equivalent payments with respect to Stock subject to the Award (both before and after the Stock subject to the Award is earned, vested, or acquired), which payments may be either made currently or credited to an account for the Participant, and may be settled in cash or Stock, as determined by the Committee. Any such settlements, and any such crediting of dividends or dividend equivalents or reinvestment in shares of Stock, may be subject to such conditions, restrictions and contingencies as the Committee shall establish, including the reinvestment of such credited amounts in Stock equivalents.

Section 4.7. SETTLEMENT OF AWARDS. The obligation to make payments and distributions with respect to Awards may be satisfied through cash payments, the delivery of shares of Stock, the granting of replacement Awards, or combination thereof as the Committee shall determine. In lieu of issuing a fraction of a share upon any exercise of an Award, resulting from an adjustment of the Award pursuant to paragraph 4.2(f) of the Plan or otherwise, the Company will be entitled to pay to the Participant an amount equal to the fair market value of such fractional share. Satisfaction of any obligations under an Award, which is sometimes referred to as "settlement" of the Award, may be subject to such conditions, restrictions and contingencies as the Committee shall determine. The Committee may permit or require the deferral of any Award payment, subject to such rules and procedures as it may establish, which may include provisions for the payment or crediting of interest or dividend equivalents, and may include

converting such credits into deferred Stock equivalents. Each Subsidiary shall be liable for payment of cash due under the Plan with respect to any Participant to the extent that such benefits are attributable to the services rendered for that Subsidiary by the Participant. Any disputes relating to liability of a Subsidiary for cash payments shall be resolved by the Committee.

Section 4.8. TRANSFERABILITY. Except as otherwise permitted by the Committee,

(a) Awards under the Plan are not transferable except as designated by the Participant by will, by the laws of descent and distribution or by a beneficiary form filed with the Company.

(b) Awards may be exercised or claimed on behalf of a deceased Participant or other person entitled to benefits under the Plan by the beneficiary of such Participant or other person if the Company has a valid designation of such beneficiary on file, or otherwise by the personal legal representative of such Participant or other person.

Section 4.9. FORM AND TIME OF ELECTIONS. Unless otherwise specified herein, each election required or permitted to be made by any Participant or other person entitled to benefits under the Plan, and any permitted modification, or revocation thereof, shall be in writing filed with the Committee at such times, in such form, and subject to such restrictions and limitations, not inconsistent with the terms of the Plan, as the Committee shall require.

Section 4.10. AGREEMENT WITH COMPANY. An Award under the Plan shall be subject to such terms and conditions, not inconsistent with the Plan, as the Committee shall, in its sole discretion, prescribe. The terms and conditions of any Award to any Participant shall be reflected in such form of written document as is determined by the Committee. A copy of such document shall be provided to the Participant, and the Committee may, but need not require that the  
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Participant sign a copy of such document. Such document is referred to in the Plan as an "Award Agreement" regardless of whether any Participant signature is required.

Section 4.11. ACTION BY COMPANY OR SUBSIDIARY. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Company or any Subsidiary shall be by resolution of its board of directors, or by action of one or more members of the board (including a committee of the board) who are duly authorized to act for the board, or (except to the extent prohibited by applicable law or applicable rules of any stock exchange) by a duly authorized officer of such company.

Section 4.12. GENDER AND NUMBER. Where the context admits, words in any gender shall include any other gender, words in the singular shall include the plural and the plural shall include the singular.

#### Section 4.13. LIMITATION OF IMPLIED RIGHTS.

(a) Neither a Participant nor any other person shall, by reason of participation in the Plan, acquire any right in or title to any assets, funds or property of the Company or any Subsidiary whatsoever, including, without limitation, any specific funds, assets, or other property which the Company or any Subsidiary, in its sole discretion, may set aside in anticipation of a liability under the Plan. A Participant shall have only a contractual right to the Stock or amounts, if any, payable under the Plan, unsecured by any assets of the Company or any Subsidiary, and nothing contained in the Plan shall constitute a guarantee that the assets of the Company or any Subsidiary shall be sufficient to pay any benefits to any person.

(b) The Plan does not constitute a contract of employment, and selection as a Participant will not give any participating employee the right to be retained in the employ of the Company or any Subsidiary, nor any right or claim to any benefit under the Plan, unless such right or claim has specifically accrued under the terms of the Plan. Except as otherwise provided in the Plan, no Award under the Plan shall confer upon the holder thereof any rights as a shareholder of the Company prior to the date on which the individual fulfills all conditions for receipt of such rights.

Section 4.14. EVIDENCE. Evidence required of anyone under the Plan may be by certificate, affidavit, document or other information which the person acting on it considers pertinent and reliable, and signed, made or presented by the proper party or parties.

#### ARTICLE 5 CHANGE OF CONTROL

Subject to the provisions of paragraph 4.2(f) (relating to the adjustment of shares), and except as otherwise provided in the Plan or the Award Agreement reflecting the applicable Award, upon the occurrence of a Change of Control the following provisions shall apply:

Section 5.1. ACCELERATION OF VESTING. If a Change of Control of the Company shall occur, then with respect to outstanding Awards not already vested and/or exercisable, the Committee, in its sole discretion, may determine that:

(a) All outstanding Options (regardless of whether in tandem with SARs)  
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shall become fully exercisable.

(b) All outstanding SARs (regardless of whether in tandem with Options) shall become fully exercisable.

(c) All Stock Units, Restricted Stock, Restricted Stock Units, and Performance Shares shall become fully vested.

If the Committee determines to accelerate any such outstanding Awards, then such Awards shall remain vested and/or exercisable during the remaining term thereof, regardless of whether the employment or other status of the Participants with respect to which Awards have been granted shall continue with the Company or any Subsidiary.

Section 5.2. CASH PAYMENT. Without limiting the generality of Section 4.7, if a Change of Control of the Company shall occur, then the Committee, in its sole discretion, and without the consent of any Participant affected thereby, may determine that some or all Participants holding outstanding Awards shall receive cash settlements in exchange for redemption of all or a part of such Awards.

Section 5.3. LIMITATION ON CHANGE OF CONTROL PAYMENTS. Notwithstanding anything in Section 5.1 or 5.2 above to the contrary, if, with respect to a Participant, the acceleration of the exercisability and/or vesting of an Award As provided in Section 5.1 or the payment of cash in exchange for all or part of an Award as provided in Section 5.2 above (which acceleration or payment could be deemed a "payment" within the meaning of Section 280G(b)(2) of the Code), together with any other payments which such Participant has the right to receive from the Company or any corporation which is a member of an "affiliated group" (as defined in Section 1504(a) of the Code without regard to Section 1504(b) of the Code) of which the Company is a member, would constitute a "parachute payment" (as defined in Section 280G(b)(2) of the Code), then the acceleration of exercisability and/or vesting and the payments to such Participant pursuant to Sections 5.1 and 5.2 above shall be reduced to the extent or amount as, in the sole judgment of the Committee, will result in no portion of such payments being subject to the excise tax imposed by Section 4999 of the Code.

## ARTICLE 6 COMMITTEE

Section 6.1. ADMINISTRATION. The authority to control and manage the operation and administration of the Plan shall be vested in a committee (the "Committee") in accordance with this Article 6. The Committee shall be selected by the Board, and shall consist solely of two or more members of the Board who are not employees of the Company or any Subsidiary. Unless otherwise determined by the Board, the Compensation Committee of the Board shall serve as the Committee for purposes of the Plan. If at any time the Committee does not exist, or for any other reason determined by the Board, the Board may take any action under the Plan that would otherwise be the responsibility of the Committee.

Section 6.2. POWERS OF COMMITTEE. The Committee's administration of the Plan shall be subject to the following:

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(a) Subject to the provisions of the Plan, the Committee will have the authority and discretion to select from among the Eligible Recipients those persons who shall receive Awards, to determine the time or times of receipt, to determine the types of Awards and the number of shares covered by the Awards, to establish the terms, conditions, performance criteria, restrictions, and other provisions of such Awards, and (subject to the restrictions imposed by Article 7) to cancel or suspend Awards.

(b) To the extent that the Committee determines that the restrictions imposed by the Plan preclude the achievement of the material purposes of the Awards in jurisdictions outside the United States, the Committee will have the authority and discretion to modify those restrictions as the Committee determines to be necessary or appropriate to conform to applicable requirements or practices of jurisdictions outside of the United States.

(c) The Committee will have the authority and discretion to interpret the Plan, to establish, amend, and rescind any rules and regulations relating to the Plan, to determine the terms and provisions of any Award Agreement made pursuant to the Plan, and to make all other determinations that may be necessary or advisable for the administration of the Plan.

(d) Any interpretation of the Plan by the Committee and any decision made by it under the Plan is final and binding on all persons.

(e) In controlling and managing the operation and administration of the Plan, the Committee shall take action in a manner that conforms to the articles and by-laws of the Company, and applicable state corporate law.

Section 6.3. DELEGATION BY COMMITTEE. Except to the extent prohibited by applicable law or the applicable rules of a stock exchange, the Committee may allocate all or any portion of its responsibilities and powers to any one or more of its members and may delegate all or any part of its responsibilities and powers to any person or persons selected by it. Any such allocation or delegation may be revoked by the Committee at any time.

Section 6.4. INFORMATION TO BE FURNISHED TO COMMITTEE. The Company and Subsidiaries shall furnish the Committee with such data and information as it determines may be required for it to discharge its duties. The records of the Company and Subsidiaries as to an employee's or Participant's employment, termination of employment, leave of absence, reemployment and compensation shall be conclusive on all persons unless determined to be incorrect. Participants and other persons entitled to benefits under the Plan must furnish the Committee such evidence, data or information as the Committee considers desirable to carry out the terms of the Plan.

## ARTICLE 7

## AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION

The Board may, at any time, amend or terminate the Plan, provided that no amendment or termination may, in the absence of written consent to the change by the affected Participant (or, if the Participant is not then living, the affected beneficiary), adversely affect the rights of any Participant or beneficiary under any Award granted under the Plan prior to the date such amendment is adopted by the Board; and further provided that adjustments pursuant to paragraph <Page>

4.2(f) shall not be subject to the foregoing limitations of this Article 7. Amendments to this Plan shall be subject to shareholder approval to the extent such approval is required by applicable law or applicable requirements of any securities exchange or similar entity.

## ARTICLE 8 DEFINED TERMS

In addition to the other definitions contained herein, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Award. The term "Award" shall mean any award or benefit granted under the Plan, including, without limitation, the grant of Options, SARs, Stock Unit Awards, Restricted Stock Awards, Restricted Stock Unit Awards, Performance Unit Awards, and Performance Share Awards.

(b) Award Agreement. The term "Award Agreement" has the meaning assigned in Section 4.10.

(c) Board. The term "Board" shall mean the Board of Directors of the Company.

(d) Change of Control. The term "Change of Control" shall mean (a) the sale, lease, exchange or other transfer of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company (in one transaction or in a series of related transactions) to a corporation that is not controlled by the Company, (b) the approval by the shareholders of the Company of any plan or proposal for the liquidation or dissolution of the Company, (c) a successful tender offer for the Common Stock of the Company, after which the tendering party holds more than 30% of the issued and outstanding Common Stock of the Company, or (d) a merger, consolidation, share exchange, or other transaction to which the Company is a party pursuant to which the holders of all of the shares of the Company outstanding prior to such transaction do not hold, directly or indirectly, at least 70% of the outstanding shares of the surviving company after the transaction.

(e) Code. The term "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. A reference to any provision of the Code shall include reference to

any successor provision of the Code.

(f) Committee. The term "Committee" has the meaning assigned in Section 6.1.

(g) Company. The term "Company" has the meaning assigned in Section 1.1.

(h) Effective Date. The term "Effective Date" has the meaning assigned in Section 4.1.

(i) Eligible Recipient. The term "Eligible Recipient" shall mean any employee of the Company or a Subsidiary and any of those consultants and independent contractors of the Company or a Subsidiary who are natural persons. An Award may be granted to an employee, consultant or independent contractor in connection with hiring, retention or otherwise, prior to the date he or she first performs services for the Company or the Subsidiaries, provided that such Awards shall not become vested prior to the date he or she first performs such services. An Award may also be granted to an employee, consultant or independent contractor in connection  
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with the conclusion of such employee, consultant or independent contractor's performance of services and separation from the Company or its Subsidiaries. The effect of discontinuity in an Eligible Recipient's service with the Company or its Subsidiaries on any outstanding Award shall be at the discretion of the Committee.

(j) Exercise Price. The term "Exercise Price" has the meaning assigned in Section 2.2.

(k) Fair Market Value. For purposes of determining the "Fair Market Value" of a share of Stock as of any date, the following rules shall apply:

(i) If the principal market for the Stock is a national securities exchange or the Nasdaq Stock Market, then the "Fair Market Value" as of that date shall be the closing sale price of the Stock on the principal exchange or market on which the Stock is then listed or admitted to trading on the trading day immediately preceding such date.

(ii) If sale prices are not available or if the principal market for the Stock is not a national securities exchange and the Stock is not quoted on the Nasdaq Stock Market, the average between the highest bid and lowest asked prices for the Stock on such day as reported on the Nasdaq OTC Bulletin Board Service or by the National Quotation Bureau, Incorporated or a comparable service.

(iii) If the day is not a business day, and as a result, paragraphs (i) and (ii) next above are inapplicable, the Fair Market Value of the Stock shall be determined as of the next earlier business day. If paragraphs (i) and (ii) next above are otherwise inapplicable, then the Fair Market Value of the Stock shall be determined in good faith by the Committee.

(l) ISO. The term "ISO" has the meaning assigned in Section 2.1(a).

(m) NQO. The term "NQO" has the meaning assigned in Section 2.1(a).

(n) Option. The term "Option" has the meaning assigned in Section 2.1(a).

(o) Participant. The term "Participant" has the meaning assigned in Section 1.2.

(p) Performance Unit. The term "Performance Unit" has the meaning assigned in Section 3.1(c).

(q) Performance Share. The term "Performance Share" has the meaning assigned in Section 3.1(b).

(r) Plan. The term "Plan" has the meaning assigned in Section 1.1.

(s) Prior Plan. The term "Prior Plan" has the meaning assigned in Section 4.2(b).

(t) Restricted Stock. The term "Restricted Stock" has the meaning assigned in Section 3.1(d).

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(u) Restricted Stock Unit. The term "Restricted Stock Unit" has the meaning assigned in Section 3.1(d).

(v) SAR. The term "SAR" has the meaning assigned in Section 2.1(b).

(w) Subsidiaries. The term "Subsidiary" means any company during any period in which it is a "subsidiary corporation" (as that term is defined in Code section 424(f)) with respect to the Company.

(x) Stock. The term "Stock" shall mean shares of common stock of the Company.

(y) Stock Unit. The term "Stock Unit" has the meaning assigned in Section 3.1(a).

Exhibit 5.1

July 1, 2003

Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.  
500 Volvo Parkway  
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320

RE: Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. 2003 Equity Incentive Plan  
Form S-8 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have acted as counsel to Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. (the "Company") in connection with the registration by the Company under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Act") of 6,000,000 shares of Common Stock of Dollar Tree Stores, Inc., a Virginia corporation (the "Shares") issuable under the Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. 2003 Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan") under a Registration Statement on Form S-8 (the "Registration Statement") expected to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on July 8, 2003.

We have examined such documents, records, and matters of law as we have deemed necessary for purposes of this opinion and, based thereon, we are of the opinion that, when the Shares have been registered under the Act, when the Company has completed the actions being taken in order to permit issuance of the Shares in accordance with the securities laws of the various states where required, and when the Company receives consideration for the Shares in accordance with the provisions of the Plan and the Shares have been issued by the Company as provided under the Plan, the Shares will be legally and validly issued, fully-paid and non-assessable.

This opinion letter is limited to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal laws of the United States of America.

We consent to the use of this opinion as an exhibit to the Registration Statement. In giving such consent, we do not hereby admit that we come within the category of persons whose consent is required under Section 7 of the Act or the Rules and Regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission promulgated under the Act.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Hofheimer Nusbaum, P.C.

Independent Auditors' Consent

The Board of Directors  
Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.:

We consent to the use of our report incorporated herein by reference.

Our report refers to a change in the method of accounting for merchandise inventories from the first-in, first-out method to the average cost method. Our report also indicates the adoption of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 142, Goodwill and Other Intangible Assets, and Financial Accounting Standards Board Interpretation No. 46, Consolidation of Variable Interest Entities.

/s/ KPMG LLP

Norfolk, Virginia  
July 7, 2003