

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Expedited Special Capital Improvements Projects - White Bill 26-23: Flint Fire Station 23

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 26-23 will have little to no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as the bill is proposing the authorization of a capital improvement project which is intended to increase fire and rescue services to one area in the County.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 26-23

The purpose of Expedited Bill 26-23 is to authorize a capital improvement project whose locally funded cost will exceed \$24,196,000 in FY24 dollars. The Bill would allow for a new Fire and Rescue station in the Rockville/White Flint area to be built, along with the purchase of associated apparatus, such as personnel living quarters and meeting/training rooms. Space has been added to co-locate a future Police Substation at the fire station. Under County law, the County Council must authorize "Special Capital Improvements Projects" if their local costs exceed a given threshold, which is set at \$24,196,000 in FY24 dollars.¹

It is estimated that the locally funded cost of this project will total \$38,227,000 for the FY24 Capital Budget and Amended FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for planning, design, and construction costs. Since the anticipated cost of the project exceeds the FY24 local funding threshold, the Executive needs the Council's authorization through legislation to continue the project. Expedited Bill 26-23, Special Capital Improvements Projects – White Flint Fire Station 23 was introduced to the Council on behalf of the County Executive on May 25, 2023.²

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Capital improvement planning is an important tool for local jurisdictions to systematically identify, budget, and prioritize investment in local projects. It can also enable jurisdictions to ensure the efficient delivery of emergency services.³ Increasing the capacity to deliver emergency services can contribute to a community's overall emergency preparedness and can improve its climate resilience.⁴ The Special Capital Project specified in Expedited Bill 26-23 is intended to accommodate the rapid growth of the White Flint area by improving the delivery of fire and rescue services in the White Flint area.⁵

However, as the purview of the climate assessment is to look at a bill's impact to the County's overall contribution to addressing climate change and community climate resilience, OLO expects Expedited Bill 26-23 to have little to no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptative capacity. This is because the bill is authorizing a capital improvement project which is intended to increase fire and rescue services to one area in the County. Further, new construction emits greenhouse gas emissions. While the potential greenhouse gases associated with this project are unable to be calculated as the type of material, transportation, and other construction factors are unknown at this time, it can be expected that one construction project will not contribute a significant amount to the County's overall greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.⁷ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 26-23 is likely to have little to no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptative capacity.

CAVEATS

OLO notes two caveats to this climate assessment. First, predicting the impacts of legislation upon climate change is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and the broad, global nature of climate change. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to inform the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These climate assessments will provide the Council with a more thorough understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed legislation, at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to the County's contribution to addressing climate change, specifically upon the County's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and how actions suggested by legislation could help improve the County's adaptative capacity to climate change, and therefore, increase community resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed County bills may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

¹ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 26-23, Montgomery County Council, Introduced May 25, 2023.](#)

² Ibid.

³ [University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, "Integrating Resilience into Local Capital Improvement Programs: Best Practices for Maryland's Eastern Shore Communities", December 2018.](#)

⁴ [National Research Council, "Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative", 2012.](#)

⁵ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 26-23, Montgomery County Council, Introduced May 25, 2023.](#)

⁶ [International Energy Agency \(IEA\), "2019 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction: Towards a Zero-Emissions, Efficient, and Resilient Buildings and Construction Sector", 2019.](#) ,

⁷ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022