

# Climate Assessment

## Office of Legislative Oversight

### Bill 30-23: Rustic Roads Program – Rustic Roads Advisory Committee

#### SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 30-23 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing changes regarding the composition and duties of an existing committee.

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#### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 30-23

Rustic roads are historic and scenic roadways that reflect the agricultural character and rural origins of the County. Rustic and exceptional rustic roads are preserved under the Rustic Roads Program (Chapter 49, Article 8), which provides a system for evaluating, protecting, and enhancing these scenic roadways. The program includes 99 roads. These roads are listed and described in the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plans and in other area master plans.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of Bill 30-23 is to enact recommendations from the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan (RRFMP) Update regarding the composition and duties of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) as follows:

- Change the number of voting members from seven to nine members who are County residents, including three at-large members with general connection to rustic roads through their profession, business, or as users.<sup>2</sup>
- Expand the Committee's duties to include providing reviews and comments on subdivision applications, proposed improvements to rustic roads, and proposed signs within the right-of-way of a rustic road.<sup>3</sup>

Bill 30-23 also directs the County Executive to strive to achieve diversity on the RRAC in support of racial equity and social justice (RESJ).

Bill 30-23, Rustic Road Program – Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, was introduced by the Council on behalf of the Planning Board on June 20, 2023. The Planning Board Draft of the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update is currently under review by the County Council pending a public hearing in July 2023.<sup>4</sup>

## ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As Bill 30-23 proposes changes to the composition and duties of an existing committee, OLO anticipates the bill will have 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.

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## RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.<sup>5</sup> OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 30-23 is likely to have 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 30-23, Montgomery County Council, June 20, 2023.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022