

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 33-23: Police – Voluntary Registry for Emergency 911 Calls - Established

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 33-23 will likely have little to no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as the proposed voluntary registry is unlikely to have a measurable impact on the County's overall community resilience.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 33-23

Voluntary 911 registry programs collect the personal and medical information of individuals with disabilities and provide law enforcement and other first responders with access to this information during emergency responses. Registry programs are intended to improve interactions during emergency situations for individuals with disabilities or special needs who choose to opt-in.¹

During the 2023 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly proposed but failed to pass a bill that would require local jurisdictions to establish voluntary 911 registry programs.² Voluntary registries have been implemented in other jurisdictions in Maryland, including Howard County.³

If enacted, Bill 33-23 would:

- Establish a voluntary registry for emergency 911 calls for individuals to provide, directly or through a caregiver, personal and medical information;
- Permit the collection of information regarding an individual's behaviors and other diagnoses such as sensitivity to bright lights, tendency to avoid eye contact, nonverbal language, hearing or visually impairment, autism, physical disability, and others; and
- Permit the registry information to be accessed by first responders, including those who provide police, fire fighting, emergency medical services or mobile crisis response, when responding to a call at a flagged address.⁴

According to the sponsor of Bill 33-23, the personal information submitted to the registry will remain in the Computer Aided Dispatch System for first responders after the individual or caregiver completes an online form at no cost.⁵

Bill 33-23, Police – Voluntary Registry for Emergency 911 Calls – Established, was introduced by the County Council on July 25, 2023.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Some literature suggests that voluntary registries could improve emergency response after a natural disaster, especially for registries designed to identify individuals who may require special assistance during and after a natural disaster.⁶ By opting in and making first responders aware of one's location and needs, it could aid in a quicker emergency response.⁷ However, the registry proposed by Bill 33-23 does not mention if information will be accessed during a "large-scale disaster", such as a natural disaster, like other jurisdictions mention in their voluntary registry programs.⁸

OLO anticipates Bill 33-23 will 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.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.⁹ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 33-23 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 [Policy Brief: Law Enforcement Registries for Individuals with Disabilities](#), The National Center on Criminal Justice & Disability, July 2019.

² [HB 1176](#), Maryland General Assembly, Introduced February 10, 2023.

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-23](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced July 25, 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Memorandum from Councilmember Luedtke to Councilmembers, [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-23](#), July 6, 2023.

⁶ [Improving Disaster Resilience Among Older Adults](#), Rand Health Quarterly, August 2018. ; [Resilient Communities: Empowering Older Adults in Disasters and Daily Life](#), The New York Academy of Medicine, July 2014; [Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness Monitoring](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Accessed August 2, 2023.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ [Community Connect](#), Albany, CA Fire Department, Accessed August 3, 2023. ; [Special Medical Needs Voluntary Registry](#), Pitt County, North Carolina, Accessed August 3, 2023.

⁹ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022