

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 34-23: County Minimum Wage – Wage Commission - Established

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 34-23 will likely have no direct impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing the creation of a commission that could make recommendations regarding minimum wages and working conditions that improve community resilience. However, it is not guaranteed that legislation will be developed and passed based on recommendations.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 34-23

Local jurisdictions can form advisory groups to help manage and enforce various aspects of local wage laws. For instance, in Prince George's County, the Wage Determination Board is comprised of four appointed community members who are responsible for "adopt[ing], establish[ing], repeal[ing], modify[ing], chang[ing] or amend[ing] schedules of prevailing hourly rates of wages to be paid to workmen and apprentices employed on certain public works."¹ In Baltimore City, the Wage Commission is comprised of five appointed community members who are responsible for "the administration and proper operation of the minimum, living, and prevailing wage laws, as well as enforcement of the Displaced Workers Protection law."²

The purpose of Bill 34-23 is to create a wage commission in the County. The Commission would be required to study wages and working conditions by industry and provide an annual report to the County Executive and County Council with recommendations related to minimum wages and working conditions in the County.³ The Wage Commission would be comprised of 6 community members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Council, including 2 representatives of organized labor, 2 representatives of industry, and 2 members of the public. Additionally, the County's Chief Labor Relations Officer or their designee would be required to serve as a member of the Commission. If established, the Wage Commission would join the broader group of over 80 Boards, Committees, and Commissions (BCCs) in the County.⁴

Bill 34-23, County Minimum Wage - Wage Commission - Established, was introduced by the Council on September 19, 2023.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Research shows a strong correlation between an individuals' financial resources and their resilience to a disaster.⁵ Raising minimum wages can increase community resilience as individuals and households who experience an increase in income could better withstand shocks, such as extreme weather events.⁶ The intention of the proposed committee is to provide evidence-based recommendations on how to ensure decent wages across the County; however it is not guaranteed that legislation will be developed and passed based on recommendations.⁷

As the bill proposes the creation of a wage commission, which would make recommendations regarding minimum wage and working conditions that could improve community resilience, OLO anticipates Bill 34-23 will have no direct 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.⁸ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 34-23 is likely to have no direct 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 [Wage Determination Board](#), Prince George's County, Maryland.

² [Wage Commission](#), Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Baltimore City, Maryland.

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 34-23](#), Introduced September 21, 2023.

⁴ [Board, Committees, and Commissions](#), Office of the County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland.

⁵ ["FEMA Community Resilience Challenges Index"](#), [Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2023](#);

["The Geographies of Community Disaster Resilience"](#), [Global Environmental Change, Volume 29, 2014](#).

⁶ ["Measuring Community Resilience and Its Determinants: Relocated Vulnerable Community in Western China"](#), [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Volume 20, 2023](#); ["The Geographies of Community Disaster Resilience"](#), [Global Environmental Change, Volume 29, 2014](#).

; ["A \\$15 minimum wage would help millions of struggling households in small and mid-sized cities achieve self-sufficiency"](#), [Brookings, 2021](#); ["Our employment system has failed low-wage workers. How can we rebuild?"](#), [Brookings, 2020](#).

⁷ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 34-23](#), Introduced September 21, 2023.

⁸ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022