

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Expedited Fire and Rescue Services – Length of Service Awards Bill 41-23: Program for Volunteers - Amendments

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 41-23 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing amendments to benefits provided to fire and rescue department volunteers.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 41-23

The goal of Expedited Bill 41-23 is to implement provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement that were negotiated between the County Executive and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA). MCVFRA is the authorized representative of Local Fire and Rescue Departments (LFRDs) in their negotiations with the County. The Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) is a County program that:

“provides a monthly pension for members of a [LFRDs] who have provided volunteer fire and rescue service for a certain number of years. It is similar to the defined benefit pension for career fire and rescue employees, although the amount of the pension is significantly lower. The County pays for these benefits in budget appropriations instead of establishing a trust fund.”¹

The Bill would implement the agreement between the County Executive and MCVFRA by increasing the benefits paid to local fire and rescue department volunteers under LOSAP. If enacted, the Bill would make the following changes:

- Increase LOSAP benefits by 8% for all participants; and
- Provide an additional 7.5% increase for certain members who received LOSAP benefits as of December 31, 2022 as well as provide them with a 4% increase in FY25, and another 4% increase in FY26.²

The Council President introduced Expedited Bill 41-23 on behalf of the County Executive on November 14, 2023.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the bill proposes amendments to service benefits provided to fire and rescue department volunteers, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 41-23 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.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.³ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 41-23 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.

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 on Expedited Bill 41-23, Fire and Rescue Services – Length of Service Awards Program for Volunteers - Amendments."](#)

² Ibid.

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