

# Climate Assessment

## Office of Legislative Oversight

### Bill 7-23: Consumer Protection – Gasoline Station Signage

#### SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 7-23 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as the Bill proposes new requirements to the posting of gas prices on gas station signs as a consumer protection measure.

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#### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 7-23

Under state law, certain gas station signs in the County must post the lowest unit price charged for regular gas. The lowest unit price of gas varies depending upon the method of payment. Generally, the per unit price of regular gas when using a credit card is higher than the per unit price when using cash.<sup>1</sup>

If enacted, Bill 7-23 would require the posting of the highest credit price on gas station signs as a consumer protection measure. The Bill defines credit price as follows:

Credit price means the total amount, including any fees, payable to a gas station by a customer using a credit card or other non-cash form of payment, for one whole measurement unit of regular gasoline sold on the premises.

If gas stations fail to comply, it would constitute an unfair or deceptive trade practice under County law.

Bill 7-23 is aligned with Senate Bill 178, introduced in the Maryland General Assembly in January 2023. Like the Senate Bill, Bill 7-23 is intended to avoid consumer confusion about the lowest per unit price of gas.<sup>2</sup>

Bill 7-23, Consumer Protection – Gasoline Station Signage, was introduced by the Council on February 7, 2023.

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#### ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As Bill 7-23 proposes requiring gas stations to post the highest non-cash price on gas station signs as a consumer protection measure, OLO anticipates that it 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 adaptive 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.<sup>3</sup> OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 7-23 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 7-2, Introduced February 7, 2023.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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