

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 8-23: Boards, Committees, and Commissions – Open Meetings – Supplemental Requirements

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 8-23 will have little to no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it proposes minor changes intended to enhance open meetings and procedural requirements.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 8-23

Montgomery County has over 80 boards, committees, and commissions (BCCs). The County's BCCs are subject to, both, the state's Open Meeting Act and Article XI, Chapter 2 of the County Code.

The goal of Bill 8-23 is "to enhance existing open meetings and procedural requirements." The Bill seeks to do so by amending the County Code to further govern the operation of County BCCs. It would require BCCs to:

- publish notice of meetings within 5 business days after the meeting date has been determined, and at least 2 calendar days prior to the meeting;
- publish meeting agendas within 5 business days after they have been determined, and at least 2 calendar days prior to the meeting; and
- publish either a recording of the meeting or draft meeting minutes within 5 days after a meeting.

The County department or office assigned to staff a BCC would be required to ensure its compliance with the requirements of the legislation.

Bill 8-23, Boards, Committees, and Commissions – Open Meetings – Supplemental Requirements was introduced by the Council on February 14, 2023.¹

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Bill 8-23's purpose is to enhance existing open meetings and further increase transparency of all Montgomery County's BCCs. Increasing access to local information can have a positive impact on community resilience.² However, as these BCCs already have open meeting requirements through existing state and County laws, it is likely there will be little, if any, significant increased access to local information.

OLO anticipates Bill 8-23 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.³ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 8-23 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 [Introduction Staff Report](#) for Bill 8-23, Boards, Committees, and Commissions – Open Meetings – Supplemental Requirements, Montgomery County Council, February 14, 2023.

² ["Information Sharing and Community Resilience: Toward a Whole Community Approach to Surveillance and Combatting the 'Infodemic'", Myers, N., September 13, 2021.](#)
["Increasing Community Resilience through Improved Lifeline Infrastructure Performance", National Academy of Engineering, July 1, 2019.](#), ["Building resilience: The relationship between information provided by municipal authorities during emergency situations and community resilience", Cohen, O., Goldberg, A., Lahad, M., and Aharonson-Daniel, L., August 2017.](#)

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