

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 34-25: LEGISLATIVE PROCESS – CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS - AMENDMENTS

SUMMARY

Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Bill 34-25 proposes changes to climate assessments. Since OLO is responsible for preparing climate assessments, the office cannot provide an independent assessment of Bill 34-25.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 34-25

Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, OLO must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Likewise, the Planning Board is responsible for providing a climate assessment for each Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA), master plan, and master plan amendment considered by the District Council.¹

Each climate assessment must include an analysis of how the proposal would affect “community resilience and adaptive capacity” and recommend any amendments or actions that could mitigate negative climate impacts of the Bill or ZTA.²

Bill 34-25 would modify the contents of climate assessments required for Bills and ZTAs. Specifically, the Bill would:

- Define “community climate resilience” as “the sustained ability of a network of people to use available resources to withstand, respond, recover, and adapt to future climate hazards.”
- Define “climate hazard” as “a natural disaster or environmental consequence of climate change, such as flooding, extreme temperatures, severe storms, heavy winds, or droughts.”
- Delete from the legislation the term “adaptive capacity” on grounds that is a subset of “community climate resilience.”³

The Council introduced Bill 34-25 on November 4, 2025.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Bill 34-25 would revise requirements for Climate Assessments on Bills and ZTAs by modifying the definitions of "community climate resilience" and "climate hazard," and removing the term "adaptive capacity" from the legislation. Since OLO is responsible for preparing climate assessments, the office cannot provide an independent assessment of Bill 34-25.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Not applicable

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 adaptive 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 Christine Wellons to County Council, "Bill 34-25, Legislative Process – Climate Assessments – Amendments," memorandum, October 30, 2025 in [Introduction Staff Report](#).

² Ibid.

³ Montgomery County Council, Bill 34-25, Legislative Process – Climate Assessments – Amendments, introduced November 4, 2025, in [Introduction Staff Report](#).