

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 6-25: Consumer Protection – Defective Tenancies as Deceptive Trade Practices

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that Bill 6-25 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as the Bill is proposing a new tool that will assist tenants in making complaints about defective tenancies.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 6-25

Currently under the County's consumer protection laws, "defective tenancies" are excluded under the scope of consumer protection.¹ Currently, tenants can file formal complaints with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) regarding housing code violations.²

Bill 6-25 seeks to strengthen protections for renters by expanding the Office of Consumer Protection's authority to "investigate and enforce consumer protection laws in landlord-tenant matters that may include unfair or deceptive trade practices."³ To do so, the Bill would remove the existing exemption under County Code that previously excluded "defective tenancies" under the scope of consumer protection.⁴ From a press release regarding the Bill, the proposed changes seek to develop new tools for compliance of housing code violations and to give renters meaningful recourse when violations occur.⁵

According to the Bill's introduction packet, unfair or deceptive trade practices by landlords includes unfit rental housing, amenities not as advertised, failure to repair essential building services, imposition of junk fees, and chronic housing violations.⁶

Bill 6-25, Consumer Protection – Defective Tenancies as Deceptive Trade Practices was introduced by the County Council on February 11, 2025.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill is proposing a new tool that will assist tenants in making complaints about defective tenancies, OLO anticipates Bill 6-25 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.⁷ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 6-25 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 [Montgomery County Code § 11-5](#), Consumer Protection, Exemptions from Chapter, Accessed 2/17/2025.

² [Tenant Rights and Responsibilities](#), Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Accessed 2/17/2025.

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 6-25](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced February 11, 2025.

⁴ [Montgomery County Code § 11-5](#), Consumer Protection, Exemptions from Chapter, Accessed 2/17/2025.

⁵ [Montgomery County Councilmember Kristin Mink, Council Vice President Will Jawando, County Executive Marc Elrich, Others Hold Press Conference with Tenant Leaders for Introduction of Bill 6-25 to Hold Landlords Accountable for Chronic Code Violations](#), Montgomery County Government, February 11, 2025.

⁶ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 6-25](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced February 11, 2025.

⁷ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022