

# Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

## EXPEDITED BILL 14-26: MOTOR VEHICLE TOWING – REDEMPTION OF VEHICLE – PROOF OF OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL (THE VEHICLE RECOVERY ACT)

### SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it proposes changes to procedures on retrieving an impounded vehicle in the County.

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### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 14-26

Currently, to recover an impounded vehicle in the County, the following documentation is acceptable as proof of ownership or control under Executive regulations:

- If the owner of the vehicle is present, a U.S. or state government issued photo ID or consular registration card from any country approved in accordance with County law **and** a current or temporary registration card issued to the license plate on the vehicle;
- If the owner of the vehicle is not present, a notarized letter from the owner authorizing another individual to take custody of the vehicle; or
- Letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental car companies.<sup>1</sup>

Due to an increase in detainments in the County by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), vehicles of detained individuals have been left behind in public rights-of-way, which are then towed. This has led to difficulties in family members who are not listed on the vehicle's title to retrieve an impounded vehicle.<sup>2</sup>

Expedited Bill 14-26 aims to create a lawful mechanism for family or household members to recover the vehicle of a detained individual while maintaining appropriate safeguards. Expedited Bill 14-26 would establish the following:

- Codify Executive regulations for acceptable documentation as proof of ownership or control of a vehicle into County Code (detailed above);
- In circumstances where a notarized letter is not provided, allow a family or household member of the vehicle's owner to redeem a vehicle by presenting appropriate identification issued by U.S., state, or foreign government or a valid nonprofit organization **and** one document demonstrating shared residence or familial relationship such as a utility bill, deed, mortgage statement, lease agreement, marriage certification, or birth certificate;

- Require towing companies to obtain a signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner; and
- Prohibit false representations or fraudulent documentation in connection with a vehicle redemption.<sup>3</sup>

Expedited Bill 14-26 would sunset four years after its effective date. The Bill was introduced by the County Council on March 3, 2026.<sup>4</sup>

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## ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill proposes changes to procedures on retrieving an impounded vehicle in the County, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 will have no impact on the County’s contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

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## 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>5</sup> OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 14-26 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 and community climate resilience.

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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 increase the County’s community climate 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Code, [COMCOR 30C.00.02 Executive Towing Rules and Regulations](#), Accessed 3/13/2026.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 1 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 3 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

<sup>4</sup> Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 3 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

<sup>5</sup> Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022