

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BOND AUTHORIZATION-STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BILL 24-21:

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) expects Bill 24-21 to have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice in the County.

BACKGROUND

The County Council approved Expedited Bill 24-21 on July 13, 2021. The purpose of the Bill is to allow the County to issue up to \$34 million in special limited obligation bonds. As previously approved in the CIP budget, the bond would be used to finance the allotments for stormwater management projects. These projects are important because they help reduce water pollution in the County by implementing strategies to properly manage potentially toxic stormwater runoff, this is especially beneficial for urban and developed areas that produce toxic chemicals.¹ Expedited Bill 24-21 will add the following to Montgomery County Law:

- authorize the County to issue special limited obligation bonds for the purposes of financing the planning, design, acquisition, and construction and maintenance of stormwater management facilities and other related projects;
- for refunding all or part of the outstanding special limited obligation bonds issued for such purposes.²

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

Expedited Bill 24-21's aggregate racial equity and social justice impacts to the County would require a detailed investigation of the all the stormwater management projects covered under the appropriations. This investigation is beyond the scope of this impact statement. However, the Natural Resource Defense Council reports that people of color and low-income residents are most at risk of experiencing diminished health outcomes due to their exposure to undrinkable water and hazardous soil, both are potential negative consequences of stormwater runoff.³ As such, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 24-21 having a positive racial equity and social justice impact if it would help improve the quality of water in Montgomery County.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging, analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than 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.

RESJ Impact Statement

Expedited Bill 24-21

¹ Watershed Restoration, Department of Environmental Protection, Montgomery County, Maryland.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/wqpc/about.html>

² Montgomery County Council, Expedited Bill 24-21, Bond Authorization- Stormwater Management, Introduced on June 29, 2021, Montgomery County, Maryland.

³ Kristi Pullen Fedinick, et. al., Report: Watered Down Justice, September 2019, Natural Resource Defense Council.

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/watered-down-justice-report.pdf>