

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 19-24: Taxicab Licenses – Amended Requirements

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 19-24 will have no impact on the County’s contribution to addressing climate change as it unlikely the bill would have a significant impact on the County’s transportation sector greenhouse gas emissions due to the small number of taxicabs compared to personal vehicles in the County.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 19-24

In 2021, the County Council passed Expedited Bill 47-21, which increased the permissible age of taxicabs in the County from eight to ten years. Bill 47-21 included a sunset clause that set the Bill to expire on December 31, 2024. If no action is taken on the clause, the permissible age of taxicabs in the County will return to eight years on this date.¹

The purpose of Bill 19-24 is to repeal the sunset clause under Expedited Bill 47-21 and make other changes to taxicab laws in the County. If enacted, Bill 19-24 would:²

- Permanently increase the permissible age of taxicabs from eight to ten years;
- Allow hybrid, electric, and wheelchair accessible (WAV) taxicabs to be in use for twelve years; and
- Require taxicab drivers who are in an accident to submit accident reports to the Department of Transportation in addition to the holder of the taxicab license.

According to the County Executive, permanently changing the permissible age of taxicabs to ten years will allow “Montgomery County’s taxicab industry to remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions,”³ which allow taxicabs to be operated for at least ten years. Further, creating a new category for alternative-fuel and WAV taxicabs and allowing these vehicles to operate for two additional years “may incentivize PVL [Passenger Vehicle License] holders to transition to and invest more heavily in those vehicles.”⁴

The Council introduced Bill 19-24, Taxicab Licenses – Amended Requirements, at the request of the County Executive on September 17, 2024.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

In the United States, the transportation sector accounts for about 30% of the total energy needs and about 70% of petroleum consumption for the country. Electric vehicles can reduce the amount of carbon emissions in the transportation sector as well as the transportation sector's dependency on gasoline.⁵ Amongst the life cycle of vehicles of comparable size, battery electric vehicles have the lowest greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

Currently, there are 200 taxicabs in service in Montgomery County, and 33 of those are either hybrid or wheelchair accessible that will soon be reaching their permissible age under the current law. Compared to the number of personal vehicles registered in the County⁷, the number of taxicabs is minimal. The letter from the County Executive presenting Bill 19-24 notes that the proposed changes may incentivize PVL holders to transition to and invest more heavily in alternative fuel, electric, and hybrid vehicles.⁸ However, due to the small percentage of taxicabs to personal vehicles in the County, it is unlikely that the bill would have a significant impact on the County's transportation sector emissions⁹ or its contribution to addressing climate change.

OLO anticipates Bill 19-24 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 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.¹⁰ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 19-24 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 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 [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 19-24](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced September 17, 2024, PDF pg. 3.

² Ibid.

³ Memorandum from County Executive to Council President, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 19-24, PDF pg. 9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ [Alternative Fuels Data Center: Electric Vehicle Benefits and Considerations](#), U.S. Department of Energy, Accessed 10/7/2024; [Cradle-to-Grave Lifecycle Analysis of U.S. Light-Duty Vehicle-Fuel Pathways: A Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Economic Assessment of Current \(2020\) and Future \(2030-2035\) Technologies](#), U.S. Department of Energy Office of Scientific and Technical Information, June 1, 2022.

⁶ [A global comparison of the life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions of combustion engine and electric passenger cars](#), The International Council on Clean Transportation, July 20, 2021.

⁷ According to data from the MVA, there were 796,365 registered vehicles in Montgomery County in FY23. Source: [MVA Vehicle Registration by County from 2010 to 2023](#)

⁸ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 19-24](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced September 17, 2024.

⁹ 42% of the County's greenhouse gas emissions comes from the transportation sector.

Source: [Press Release: Montgomery County Leads in Zero-Emissions Public Transportation Transition and Encourages Residents to Try Alternate Modes Ahead of Earth Day](#)

¹⁰ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022