

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

Bill 27-24: Animal Control – Impoundment and Disposition

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 27-24 will have no impact on the County’s contribution to addressing climate change as the bill proposes changes to an existing law’s timeline regarding animal impoundment.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 27-24

According to Montgomery County Code, an animal may be impounded¹ by an animal control officer, the Executive Director of Animal Services, or the Animal Matters Hearing Board, to protect the health or safety of a person, animal, or the public.¹

Once an animal is impounded, the director must promptly make a “reasonable effort” to find and notify the owner of the impounded animal. Currently an owner has five days to reclaim their animal and pay the estimated cost of caring for the animal after receiving the notice of impoundment.² If the owner does not pay, the impounded animal is considered abandoned and becomes County property.³

Bill 27-24 seeks to reduce the time an owner has to reclaim their animal from five days to three days, which is consistent with Maryland State law.⁴ The bill would further require the notice of impoundment to be posted on the animal owner’s door and on the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center website. The intention of the bill is to reduce overcrowding at the animal shelter and allow for abandoned animals to be adopted more quickly.⁵

Bill 27-24, Animal Control – Impoundment and Disposition, was introduced by the County Council on December 3, 2024.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the bill proposes changes to an existing law’s timeline regarding animal impoundment, OLO anticipates Bill 27-24 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.

¹ Defined as seizing and holding in legal custody

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.⁶ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 27-24 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 adaptive 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 [Montgomery County Code, § 5-303, Accessed 12/9/2024.](#)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ [Maryland Code, Crim. Law § 10-617 - Disposal of domestic animal, Accessed 12/9/2024.](#)

⁵ [Montgomery County Council, Staff Introduction Report for Bill 27-24, Introduced December 3, 2024.](#)

⁶ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022