

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 32-25: EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM – SURVIVOR BENEFITS – DEATH DURING LINE OF DUTY (THE “HERO ACT”)

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 32-25 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing changes to a retirement system for certain County employees.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 32-25

Currently, a surviving spouse or child of a Group G member County employee who died in the line of duty is entitled to benefits. Group G employees include paid firefighters, fire officers, and rescue service personnel.¹

Expedited Bill 32-25 would establish a third option for death benefits, in addition to the current two options, to spouses and children of a Group G member who died in the line of duty, as follows:

“The benefits the spouse would have received if the member had terminated employment on the day before the date of death with exactly twenty years of credited service and had elected a 100% joint and survivor pension option.”²

The Bill would also establish that any of the three options selected would be payable upon the date of death of the Group G member and it would be required to be paid beginning on the first of the month following the date of death.³

Expedited Bill 32-25, Employees' Retirement System – Survivor Benefits – Death During Line of Duty (the “HERO Act”) was introduced by the County Council on October 21, 2025.⁴

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the bill is proposing changes to a retirement system for certain County employees, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 32-25 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.⁵ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 32-25 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 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 [Summary Description for Sworn Fire Personnel in Retirement Group G, Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans, August 2023.](#)

² [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 32-25, Montgomery County Council, October 21, 2025.](#)

³ [Councilmembers Evan Glass and Sidney Katz Introduce the HERO Act, Press Release, Montgomery County Government, October 21, 2025.](#)

⁴ [Ibid.](#)

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