

# Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

## Office of Legislative Oversight

### BILL 34-25: LEGISLATIVE PROCESS - CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS - AMENDMENTS

#### SUMMARY

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Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Bill 34-25 proposes changes to climate assessments. Since OLO is responsible for preparing climate assessments, the office cannot provide an independent assessment of Bill 34-25.

#### PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

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RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.<sup>1</sup> This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.<sup>2</sup>

#### PURPOSE OF BILL 34-25

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Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, OLO must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Likewise, the Planning Board is responsible for providing a climate assessment for each Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA), master plan, and master plan amendment considered by the District Council.<sup>3</sup>

Each climate assessment must include an analysis of how the proposal would affect “community resilience and adaptive capacity” and recommend any amendments or actions that could mitigate negative climate impacts of the Bill or ZTA.<sup>4</sup>

Bill 34-25 would modify the contents of climate assessments required for Bills and ZTAs. Specifically, the Bill would:<sup>5</sup>

- Define “community climate resilience” as “the sustained ability of a network of people to use available resources to withstand, respond, recover, and adapt to future climate hazards.”
- Define “climate hazard” as “a natural disaster or environmental consequence of climate change, such as flooding, extreme temperatures, severe storms, heavy winds, or droughts.”
- Delete from the legislation the term “adaptive capacity” on the grounds that is a subset of “community climate resilience.”

The Council introduced Bill 34-25 on November 4, 2025.

#### ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

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Under Section 2-81D of the County Code, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) must prepare a climate assessment for every Bill introduced by the Council. Bill 34-25 would revise requirements for Climate Assessments on Bills and ZTAs by modifying the definitions of “community climate resilience” and “climate hazard,” and removing the term “adaptive capacity” from the legislation. Since OLO is responsible for preparing climate assessments, the office cannot provide an independent assessment of Bill 34-25.

# RESJ Impact Statement

## Bill 34-25

### RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

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The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires OLO to consider whether recommended amendments to bills aimed at narrowing racial and social inequities are warranted in developing RESJ impact statements.<sup>6</sup> OLO cannot provide an independent assessment of Bill 34-25. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

### CAVEATS

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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 impact 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from [Marlysa Gamblin et al., "Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs," Bread for the World](#) and [Racial Equity Tools](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 34-25, Montgomery County Council, Introduced November 4, 2025](#).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bill 34-25, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 34-25.

<sup>6</sup> [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council](#).