

MEMORANDUM

April 10, 2026

TO: Public Safety Committee
Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee

FROM: Ludeen McCartney-Green, Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Expedited Bill 14-26 - Motor Vehicle Towing – Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of Ownership or Control (The Vehicle Recovery Act)

PURPOSE: Worksession – to receive a Committee recommendation

Expected Attendees

Representatives from the Montgomery County Police Department

Expedited Bill 14-26 - Motor Vehicle Towing – Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of Ownership or Control (The Vehicle Recovery Act) sponsored by Lead Sponsor Councilmember Stewart, and Co-Sponsored by Council President Fani-González, Councilmembers Friedson, Evans, Glass, Council Vice President Balcombe, and Councilmembers Mink, Jawando, Katz, and Luedtke, and, Sayles was introduced on March 3, 2026. A public hearing was held on March 24, 2026. A joint committee (Public Safety and Government Operations and Fiscal Policy) worksession will be held on April 15, 2026.

Expedited Bill 14-26 would:

- (1) specify procedures governing vehicle redemption;
- (2) require towing companies to accept alternative documentation that establishes ownership or lawful possession;
- (3) establish indemnification requirements associated with vehicle release;
- (4) provide enforcement mechanisms for misconduct related to the release of impounded vehicles; and
- (5) generally amend the law governing motor vehicle towing and immobilization on private property.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Expedited Bill 14-26 is to specify requirements governing the release of an impounded vehicle to its owner or an authorized non-owner. There has been an increasing number of individuals in the County who have been detained by federal agents, resulting in their vehicles

being left in the public right-of-way and subsequently towed. If the registered owner is unavailable, and a family member is not listed on the vehicle title, that family member is often unable to retrieve the vehicle during the period of detention. This has created significant hardship for affected families. The Bill is intended to provide a lawful mechanism for authorized individuals to recover a vehicle in such circumstances while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

BACKGROUND

The County laws regarding impounding and towing vehicles from roads align with the authority given under state law to regulate parking, stopping, and standing. Specifically, Section 26-301 (b) of the Maryland Transportation Article, provides, in part, that "any political subdivision of this State may adopt ordinances or regulations that: (1) regulate the parking of vehicles; (2) **provide for the impounding of vehicles parked in violation of the ordinances or regulations;** (3) regulate the towing of vehicles from publicly owned and privately owned parking lots; and (4) provide for the issuance of a citation by an officer for a violation of an ordinance or regulation that is adopted under this section."¹ (Emphasis added).

Chapter 30C of the County Code governs the towing or immobilization of motor vehicles on private property without the consent of the vehicle owners. In July 2015, the Council enacted Bill 17-15,² which made several changes to the law to better protect public safety in incidents involving the towing of vehicles without the vehicle's owner's consent.

Furthermore, the County's towing law provided the County Executive with the authority to establish, via regulations, administrative requirements for towing companies, including setting maximum rates, storage of vehicles, payment methods, and towing and recovery. *See*, COMCOR 30C.00.02, *Executive Towing Rules and Regulations*.

Currently, under Executive regulations, to redeem an impounded vehicle, the following are acceptable types of documentation to present as proof of ownership or control:³

- tow companies will accept a U.S. or state-government-issued photo ID or a consular registration card from any country approved pursuant to County law and a current registration or current temporary registration card issued to a permanent (metal) registration plate for the release of a vehicle to the owner.
- if the owner of the vehicle is not present, the person requesting release of the vehicle must have a notarized letter from the owner authorizing that particular individual to take custody of the vehicle.
- tow companies will accept, as proof of ownership/control, letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental-car companies.

¹ The County Council has adopted ordinances that (1) regulate parking- Chapter 31; (2) provide for impounding of illegally parked vehicles-*Id*, §§31-9, 31-21, 31-31; (3) regulate towing from public and private parking *lots-Id*, §§31-46 and 31-62; and (4) provide for issuance of a citation-*Id*, §§31-53 and 31-54.

² [Bill 17-15 - Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property - Amendments](#)

COMCOR 30C.00.02.03.

Expedited Bill 14-26 seeks to codify existing requirements in regulations regarding an owner redeeming their vehicle and to expand the legal authority for documents that may be used to prove control by an authorized non-owner when a vehicle owner is not present.

BILL SPECIFICS

Expedited Bill 14-26 establishes standardized procedures to govern the redemption of impounded vehicles. It requires **vehicle owners** to present government-issued identification (including approved consular identification) and proof of current Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration registration to retrieve a vehicle.

The Bill also authorizes release to an **authorized agent** when the owner is not present, upon submission of a notarized authorization letter or documentation from an insurance company, lienholder, or rental car company.

In certain circumstances, where a notarized letter is not provided, a **family or household member** may redeem a vehicle by presenting one form of appropriate identification issued by the U.S. or state government, a foreign government, or a valid nonprofit organization. Along with one document demonstrating shared residence or familial relationship (utility bill, deed, mortgage statement, lease agreement, marriage certificate, or birth certificate).

The Bill requires towing companies to obtain a signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner and prohibits false representations or fraudulent documentation in connection with vehicle redemption. Violations are subject to enforcement under existing County law.

Expedited Bill 14-26 sunsets 4 years after the effective date and would no longer have any full force or effect.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT STATEMENTS

Fiscal impact. According to the Office of Management and Budget “Expedited Bill 14-26 is not expected to impact County revenues and expenditures.”

Racial equity and social justice impact. OLO “anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Amid the current immigration enforcement environment, expanding the documentation that is accepted to retrieve a towed vehicle on behalf of a family or household member would disproportionately benefit Black and Latinx community members who are being targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). OLO also recognizes Bill 14-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black or Latinx.” Due to its anticipated positive RESJ impact, OLO did not offer any related amendments to Bill 14-26.

Climate assessment. OLO “anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 will no impact on the County’s contribution to addressing climate change”. As such, OLO did not offer any climate-related amendments.

PUBLIC HEARING

The County Council held a public hearing on Expedited Bill 14-26 on March 24, 2026, where 9 speakers testified. Those testifying expressed strong support for Expedited Bill 14-26, describing it as a practical and compassionate reform that helps families retrieve vehicles when the registered owner is detained, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to act. Speakers emphasized that a vehicle is often a family’s most critical asset, essential for work, school, health care, and basic stability. Pablo Blank of We Are CASA offered key recommendations to strengthen the bill, urging the Council to expand the list of accepted identification documents to include MCPS and Montgomery College student IDs, and to allow tax returns listing household members as an alternative method for proving family relationships.

Ariel Woods of the Montgomery County Immigrant Rights Collective provided detailed examples showing how ICE actions frequently result in vehicles being towed in ways that intentionally hinder families’ ability to recover them. She cited instances where ICE agents parked vehicles at fire hydrants or fire stations so they would be immediately towed and described abandoned work vans filled with expensive tools or children’s belongings left damaged in the rain.

Captain Matthew Muzzatti of the Takoma Park Police Department testified that Bill 14-26 fills a real procedural gap by creating a fair, practical, and consistent framework that allows families to recover vehicles when the registered owner is unavailable.

Overall, speakers agreed that the bill offers a balanced approach that supports residents, clarifies the process, and provides a reasonable path to reclaiming vital property.

ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE’S DISCUSSION

1. Discuss MCPD’s current procedures for a vehicle.

Under the Maryland Transportation Article Title 25, it governs certain aspects of vehicle removal, including abandoned vehicles, police-directed towing, and highway safety. However, the State framework does not fully occupy the field, leaving room for local jurisdictions to regulate:

- towing from private property
- fees, notice, and signage requirements
- consumer protection
- recovery of a vehicle

In many circumstances, County police authorize vehicle tows for public safety and traffic

enforcement reasons. The committee may wish to ask MCPD to discuss the general procedures for a vehicle that is left unattended in a public right-of-way.⁴ The process for a vehicle impounded versus determined abandoned, including how a vehicle may be reclaimed by an owner or authorized agent.

2. Consideration of additional documentation to support proof of shared residency.

The Council heard testimony from CASA regarding expanding the eligible documentation to include, for example, a student identification issued by Montgomery County Public Schools or an IRS tax return.

There is a high risk of misuse when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner based on a school-issued identification. The use of a school ID may allow a minor without a driver's license to retrieve a vehicle, raising liability concerns. Further, the suggested amendment presumes that only students in the County would have the option to use their student ID, but it doesn't account for individuals who attend school outside of the County and possess an ID from their County of jurisdiction. A vehicle is a property interest; therefore, it is important to minimize the risk of any potential unlawful deprivation of an owner. As introduced, the bill provides for other types of identification that support verifiable methods and minimize the risk to the County.

As it relates to tax returns, the primary purpose is to provide proof of income or earnings, not necessarily to verify proof of residence or familial relationships. The IRS classifies a tax return as a confidential document because it possesses personally identifiable information and highly sensitive information. It would not be best practice for a business entity (such as a towing company) that is not a financial institution or a government agency to collect or possess such documents. For those reasons, Council staff would not recommend including tax returns as proof of residency.

3. Bill formatting changes to create a new chapter.

Council staff recommends a formatting change to the placement of the bill language from Chapter 30C {Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property} to creating a new section titled Chapter 30D {Motor Vehicle Towing – Procedures for Police Tow}.

Montgomery County's towing regulatory authority primarily comes from:

- **Montgomery County Code Chapter 30C** – regulates trespass towing from private property.
- **Montgomery County Code Chapter 31A** – regulates towing businesses and requires registration with the Office of Consumer Protection.
- **COMCOR regulations and police procedures** implementing those chapters.

The purpose of Bill 14-26 is to codify procedures related to police tow, not a tow requested by a property owner. Further, a private non-consensual tow is handled by the Office of Consumer Protection, while a tow order requested by the Montgomery County Police Department is handled

⁴ [Towed vehicles page, Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County, MD](#)

by that Department. The processes and procedures for each are distinct; therefore, to avoid confusion and for clear delineation, Council staff recommend creating a new Chapter.

See page © for proposed markup of the bill.

Decision Point: Whether the Committee agrees to modify the bill's placement and create a new Chapter?

4. Recommended clarifying and technical amendments suggested by the Office of County Attorney.

- Expand the option for registration not only for Maryland vehicles, but out-of-state vehicles as well.
 - Lines 35-37: proof of current vehicle registration [[issued by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, including]] or current temporary registration card issued to a permanent (metal) registration plate [[documentation where applicable.]]
- Remove the automatic presumption that a person is an authorized agent and instead include language that refers to an individual who demonstrates they are authorized by the owner.
 - Lines 39-46: If the vehicle owner is not present, a vehicle may be released to an [[authorized agent]] individual who is not the owner but who demonstrates that they are authorized by the owner based upon presentation of: (i) a notarized letter signed by the owner authorizing release and custody of the vehicle to the named individual; or (ii) a letter from an insurance company, lienholder, or rental car company that indicates the [[agent]] named individual is entitled to custody of the vehicle.
- Line 55: “at least one form of documentation reasonably establishing...”
- Lines 68-74: Include language that aligns with state law that refers to a “secured party.”

Indemnification. A towing company must require, as a condition of release to a person who is not the vehicle owner or a secured party, execution of an indemnification and hold harmless agreement. The agreement must offer indemnity by an individual who is not the vehicle owner or a secured party for the benefit of the towing company on a form prescribed by the Montgomery County Police Department, and the agreement must include indemnification for any claims brought against the towing company by the vehicle owner or the secured party in connection with the release of the vehicle. Such indemnification must not extend to claims arising from gross negligence or willful misconduct of the County or towing company.

Decision Point: Whether the Committee adopts the following amendments as described above?

This packet contains:

Expedited Bill 14-26 Intro
Expedited Bill 14-26 Amended
Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact
Climate Assessment
Fiscal Impact Statement

Circle #

1-5
6-10
11-13
14-16
17

Expedited Bill No. 14-26
Concerning: Motor Vehicle Towing –
Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of
Ownership or Control (The Vehicle
Recovery Act)
Date: 2/26/2026 Draft No. 3
Introduced: _____
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: _____
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Stewart
Co-Sponsors: Council President Fani-González, Councilmembers Friedson, Evans, Glass, Council
Vice President Balcombe, and Councilmembers Mink, Jawando, Katz, and Luedtke

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) specify procedures governing vehicle redemption;
- (2) require towing companies to accept alternative documentation that establishes ownership or lawful possession;
- (3) establish indemnification requirements associated with vehicle release;
- (4) provide enforcement mechanisms for misconduct related to the release of impounded vehicles; and
- (5) generally amend the law governing motor vehicle towing and immobilization on private property.

By amending

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 30C, Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property
Section 30C-2

By adding

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 30C, Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property
Section 30C-8A

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

28 (1) Redemption by owner. To redeem an impounded vehicle, the
 29 vehicle owner must present the following to a towing company:

30 (A) either:

31 (i) a U.S. or state government-issued photo
 32 identification; or

33 (ii) a consular registration card from any country
 34 approved pursuant to Section 2-5; and

35 (B) proof of current vehicle registration issued by the Maryland
 36 Motor Vehicle Administration, including temporary
 37 registration documentation where applicable.

38 (2) Redemption by authorized agent.

39 (A) If the vehicle owner is not present, a vehicle may be released
 40 to an authorized agent upon presentation of:

41 (i) a notarized letter signed by the owner authorizing
 42 release and custody of the vehicle to the named
 43 individual; or

44 (ii) a letter from an insurance company, lienholder, or
 45 rental car company that indicates the agent is entitled
 46 to custody of the vehicle.

47 (B) In lieu of a letter under paragraph (2)(A), a vehicle may be
 48 released to a family member or household member of the
 49 owner upon presentation of:

50 (i) a photo identification issued by:

51 (a) the U.S. or state government;

52 (b) a foreign government; or

53 (c) a valid nonprofit organization registered in the
 54 state of Maryland; and

55 (ii) at least one documentation reasonably establishing
 56 shared residence or familial relationship, which may
 57 include:

58 (a) a utility or service bill, deed, mortgage
 59 statement, or current lease agreement that has
 60 the same residential address as shown for the
 61 registered vehicle;

62 (b) a birth certificate establishing a parent-child
 63 relationship;

64 (c) a marriage certificate; or

65 (d) other documentation deemed sufficient by the
 66 towing company, consistent with County
 67 regulations.

68 (C) Indemnification. A towing company must require, as a
 69 condition of release to a person who is not the vehicle
 70 owner, execution of an indemnification and hold harmless
 71 agreement on a form prescribed by the Office. Such
 72 indemnification must not extend to claims arising from
 73 gross negligence or willful misconduct of the County or
 74 towing company.

75 (D) Prohibited conduct. An authorized agent of a vehicle owner
 76 must not:

77 (A) falsely state that the owner authorized the release of
 78 a particular vehicle; or

79 (B) provide any false or fraudulent information in
 80 connection with redemption.

81 (c) Enforcement. A violation of this Section must constitute a violation
82 subject to enforcement under Section 30C-12.

83 **Sec 2. Expedited Effective Date.** The Council declares that this legislation is
84 necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on
85 the date on which it becomes law.

86 **Sec 3. Sunset.** Section 30C-8A must expire 4 years after its effective date, with
87 no further force or effect of law.

Expedited Bill No. 14-26
Concerning: Motor Vehicle Towing –
Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of
Ownership or Control (The Vehicle
Recovery Act)
Date: 4/10/2026 Draft No. 4
Introduced: _____
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: _____
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Stewart
Co-Sponsors: Council President Fani-González, Councilmembers Friedson, Evans, Glass, Council
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- (5) generally amend the law governing motor vehicle towing and immobilization on private property.

By amending

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 30C, Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property
Section 30C-2

By adding

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 30C, Motor Vehicle Towing and Immobilization on Private Property
Section 30C-8A

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
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<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

1 Sec. 1. [[Section 30C-2 is amended, and Section 30C-8A]] Section
2 Chapter 30D is added as follows:

3 Chapter 30D. Motor Vehicle Towing - Procedures for Police Tow.

4 30D-1. Short title; scope.

5 (a) Short title. This Section is known as “The Vehicle Recovery Act.”

6 (b) This Chapter applies to any tow companies responding to a police tow
7 request for any participating police department, police employee, or
8 authorized agency in Montgomery County when the officer or employee
9 is acting within an official capacity.

10 30D-2. Definitions.

11 In this Chapter:

12 Department means the Montgomery County Police Department.

13 Impounded vehicle means a vehicle towed and stored at the direction of
14 a Montgomery County police officer, police employee, or code
15 enforcement specialist from the County’s Abandoned Vehicle Section.

16 Participating Agency means a county, federal, state, or city agency or
17 municipality in Montgomery County that has entered into a
18 Memorandum of Understanding with the Montgomery County Police
19 Department, agreeing to abide by the Executive Towing Rules and
20 Regulations.

21 Police tow means a non-consensual tow. This is a tow constituted when
22 a Montgomery County police officer, employee or a police officer or
23 employee from a participating agency requests a tow truck and directs the
24 tow.

25 Redemption area means an area or building where a vehicle owner may
26 pay any charges necessary to redeem a vehicle.

27 Storage site means any land or building used by a towing service to store
 28 towed vehicles.

29 Vehicle means a device that is able to transport persons or property on a
 30 public highway and is required to be registered pursuant to Title 13 of the
 31 Transportation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended.

32 Vehicle Owner means the person in whose name the title to a vehicle is
 33 registered.

34 **[[30C-8A.]] 30D-2. Redemption of vehicle – proof of ownership or control.**

35 (a) [[Short title. This Section is known as “The Vehicle Recovery Act.”

36 (b) Redemption of impounded vehicle.

37 (1) Redemption by owner. To redeem an impounded vehicle, the
 38 vehicle owner must present the following to a towing company:

39 (A) either:

40 (i) a U.S. or state government-issued photo
 41 identification; or

42 (ii) a consular registration card from any country
 43 approved pursuant to Section 2-5; and

44 (B) proof of current vehicle registration issued by the Maryland
 45 Motor Vehicle Administration, including temporary
 46 registration documentation where applicable.

47 (2) Redemption by authorized agent.

48 (A) If the vehicle owner is not present, a vehicle may be released
 49 to an authorized agent upon presentation of:

50 (i) a notarized letter signed by the owner authorizing
 51 release and custody of the vehicle to the named
 52 individual; or

53 (ii) a letter from an insurance company, lienholder, or
 54 rental car company that indicates the agent is entitled
 55 to custody of the vehicle.

56 (B) In lieu of a letter under paragraph (2)(A), a vehicle may be
 57 released to a family member or household member of the
 58 owner upon presentation of:

59 (i) a photo identification issued by:

60 (a) the U.S. or state government;

61 (b) a foreign government; or

62 (c) a valid nonprofit organization registered in the
 63 state of Maryland; and

64 (ii) at least one documentation reasonably establishing
 65 shared residence or familial relationship, which may
 66 include:

67 (a) a utility or service bill, deed, mortgage
 68 statement, or current lease agreement that has
 69 the same residential address as shown for the
 70 registered vehicle;

71 (b) a birth certificate establishing a parent-child
 72 relationship;

73 (c) a marriage certificate; or

74 (d) other documentation deemed sufficient by the
 75 towing company, consistent with County
 76 regulations.

77 (C) Indemnification. A towing company must require, as a
 78 condition of release to a person who is not the vehicle
 79 owner, execution of an indemnification and hold harmless

80 agreement on a form prescribed by the Office. Such
 81 indemnification must not extend to claims arising from
 82 gross negligence or willful misconduct of the County or
 83 towing company.

84 (D) Prohibited conduct. An authorized agent of a vehicle owner
 85 must not:

86 (A) falsely state that the owner authorized the release of
 87 a particular vehicle; or

88 (B) provide any false or fraudulent information in
 89 connection with redemption.

90 (c) Enforcement. A violation of this Section must constitute a violation
 91 subject to enforcement under Section 30C-12.

92 (d) Regulations. The rules and procedures for this Chapter related to police
 93 towing are set forth in COMCOR 30C.002.02.01 – 30C.00.02.10.

94 **Sec 2. Expedited Effective Date.** The Council declares that this legislation is
 95 necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on
 96 the date on which it becomes law.

97 **Sec 3. Sunset.** [[Section 30C-8A]] Chapter 30D must expire 4 years after its
 98 effective date, with no further force or effect of law.

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 14-26: MOTOR VEHICLE TOWING - REDEMPTION OF VEHICLE - PROOF OF OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL (THE VEHICLE RECOVERY ACT)

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Amid the current immigration enforcement environment, expanding the documentation that is accepted to retrieve a towed vehicle on behalf of a family or household member would disproportionately benefit Black and Latinx community members who are being targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). OLO also recognizes Bill 14-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

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.¹ This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.²

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 14-26

Currently, to recover an impounded vehicle in the County, the following documentation is acceptable as proof of ownership or control under Executive regulations:³

- If the owner of the vehicle is present, a U.S. or state government issued photo ID or consular registration card from any country approved in accordance with County law **and** a current or temporary registration card issued to the license plate on the vehicle;
- If the owner of the vehicle is not present, a notarized letter from the owner authorizing another individual to take custody of the vehicle; or
- Letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental car companies.

Due to an increase in detentions in the County by ICE, vehicles of detained individuals have been left behind in public rights-of-way, which are then towed. This has led to difficulties in family members who are not listed on the vehicle's title to retrieve an impounded vehicle.⁴

Expedited Bill 14-26 aims to create a lawful mechanism for family or household members to recover the vehicle of a detained individual while maintaining appropriate safeguards. If enacted, Expedited Bill 14-26 would:⁵

- Codify Executive regulations for acceptable documentation as proof of ownership or control of a vehicle into County Code (detailed above);

RESJ Impact Statement

Expedited Bill 14-26

- In circumstances where a notarized letter is not provided, allow a family or household member of the vehicle's owner to redeem a vehicle by presenting appropriate identification issued by U.S., state, or foreign government or a valid nonprofit organization **and** one document demonstrating shared residence or familial relationship such as a utility bill, deed, mortgage statement, lease agreement, marriage certification, or birth certificate;
- Require towing companies to obtain a signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner; and
- Prohibit false representations or fraudulent documentation in connection with a vehicle redemption.

The Bill would sunset four years after its effective date.

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 14-26 on March 3, 2026.

This RESJIS builds on the ones for:

- Expedited Bill 26-24, Police - U visa Law Enforcement Certification Policy, published in December 2024;⁶
- Expedited Bill 35-25, County Administration - Immigrant Protection, published in January 2026;⁷ and
- Bill 3-26, Administration – Immigration Enforcement Guidance – Required, published in March 2026.⁸

Please refer to the RESJIS for Bills 26-24 and 3-26 for background on undocumented community members, U.S. immigration and racial equity.

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 14-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

All community members, regardless of race or ethnicity, could benefit from expanding the documentation that is accepted to retrieve a towed vehicle on behalf of a family or household member. Amid the current immigration enforcement environment, it may be impossible to obtain the documents that are currently required to retrieve a vehicle on behalf of a family or household member who has been detained by ICE. Thus, expanding the acceptable documentation could especially benefit community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement. As noted in prior RESJISs, Black and Latinx communities have been targeted by ICE with indiscriminate and violent immigration enforcement.^{9,10}

Therefore, OLO anticipates Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. OLO also recognizes Bill 14-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

RESJ Impact Statement

Expedited Bill 14-26

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.¹¹ OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council's decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

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

² Ibid.

³ [COMCOR 30C.00.02 Executive Towing Rules and Regulations](#), Montgomery County Code.

⁴ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-25](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced March 3, 2026, pg. 1.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 3.

⁶ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 26-24](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, December 17, 2024.

⁷ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 35-25](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, January 12, 2026.

⁸ [RESJIS for Bill 3-26](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, March 2, 2026.

⁹ M. Hellmann, ["It's like they're hunting': US citizens and legal residents report increase in racial profiling by ICE,"](#) The Guardian, January 22, 2026.

¹⁰ N. Foy, ["We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They've Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days,"](#) ProPublica, October 16, 2025.

¹¹ [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established](#), Montgomery County Council.

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 14-26: MOTOR VEHICLE TOWING – REDEMPTION OF VEHICLE – PROOF OF OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL (THE VEHICLE RECOVERY ACT)

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it proposes changes to procedures on retrieving an impounded vehicle in the County.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 14-26

Currently, to recover an impounded vehicle in the County, the following documentation is acceptable as proof of ownership or control under Executive regulations:

- If the owner of the vehicle is present, a U.S. or state government issued photo ID or consular registration card from any country approved in accordance with County law **and** a current or temporary registration card issued to the license plate on the vehicle;
- If the owner of the vehicle is not present, a notarized letter from the owner authorizing another individual to take custody of the vehicle; or
- Letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental car companies.¹

Due to an increase in detainments in the County by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), vehicles of detained individuals have been left behind in public rights-of-way, which are then towed. This has led to difficulties in family members who are not listed on the vehicle's title to retrieve an impounded vehicle.²

Expedited Bill 14-26 aims to create a lawful mechanism for family or household members to recover the vehicle of a detained individual while maintaining appropriate safeguards. Expedited Bill 14-26 would establish the following:

- Codify Executive regulations for acceptable documentation as proof of ownership or control of a vehicle into County Code (detailed above);
- In circumstances where a notarized letter is not provided, allow a family or household member of the vehicle's owner to redeem a vehicle by presenting appropriate identification issued by U.S., state, or foreign government or a valid nonprofit organization **and** one document demonstrating shared residence or familial relationship such as a utility bill, deed, mortgage statement, lease agreement, marriage certification, or birth certificate;

- Require towing companies to obtain a signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner; and
- Prohibit false representations or fraudulent documentation in connection with a vehicle redemption.³

Expedited Bill 14-26 would sunset four years after its effective date. The Bill was introduced by the County Council on March 3, 2026.⁴

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill proposes changes to procedures on retrieving an impounded vehicle in the County, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 will have no impact on the County’s contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

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 14-26 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 and community climate resilience.

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 increase the County’s community climate 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, [COMCOR 30C.00.02 Executive Towing Rules and Regulations](#), Accessed 3/13/2026.

² Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 1 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

³ Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 3 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

⁴ Montgomery County Government, [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-26, Page 3 of Memorandum](#), March 3, 2026.

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



Fiscal Impact Statement

Office of Management and Budget

Bill 14-26

Motor Vehicle Towing - Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of Ownership or Control (The Vehicle Recovery Act)

Bill Summary

Expedited Bill 14-26 specifies the requirements for the release of an impounded vehicle and expands the types of documentation permitted for an authorized person, other than the vehicle owner, to retrieve the vehicle if the owner cannot be present.

Fiscal Impact Summary

Expedited Bill 14-26 is not expected to impact County revenues and expenditures.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

The bill governs the acceptable types of documentation for the recovery of an impounded vehicle and therefore does not have a fiscal impact.

Staff Impact

The bill is not expected to impact staff time or duties.

Actuarial Analysis

The bill is not expected to impact retiree pension or group insurance costs.

Information Technology Impact

The bill is not expected to impact the County Information Technology (IT) or Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.

Other Information

Later actions that may impact revenue or expenditures if future spending is projected

The bill does not authorize future spending.

Contributors

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