



Committee: PS/GO
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Ludeen McCartney-Green Legislative Attorney
Purpose: Final action – vote expected

AGENDA ITEM #6B
April 28, 2026
Action

SUBJECT

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

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Stewart

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

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- PS and GO Joint Committee unanimously (5-0) recommends approval of Expedited Bill 14-26.
- Action – roll call vote is expected

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

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.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Joint Committee adopted (5-0), without objection, amendments to:
 - relocate language introduced under Chapter 30C to a new chapter for police-directed tows (Chapter 30D, Motor Vehicle Towing – Procedures for Police Tow);
 - allow proof of current or temporary registration, rather than limiting documentation to a Maryland registration;
 - require proof of authorization from the owner, rather than presuming authorized agency;

- clarify that at least one form of documentation reasonably establishing a shared residence or familial relationship is required; and
- clarify indemnification language to specify who is providing the indemnity.

This report contains:

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MEMORANDUM

April 23, 2026

TO: County Council

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: Action – roll call vote expected

GO and PS Committee: recommends (5-0) enactment of the Expedited Bill 14-26 unanimously.

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 on 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 was 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.

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](#)

- tow companies will accept, as proof of ownership/control, letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental-car companies.

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 that Expedited Bill 14-26 would positively impact 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.

Economic impact. The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) “anticipates that Expedited Bill 14-26 would positively impact economic conditions in the County, as measured by the Council’s priority economic indicators.” Specifically, OLO states that “The Bill would likely benefit family or household members of detained individuals whose vehicles have been towed by: (1) reducing the risk that these households permanently lose vehicles that could otherwise be retained or sold, thereby limiting household asset losses; (2) reducing the need to substitute toward more expensive or less efficient transportation options; (3) reducing the likelihood of missing shifts or reducing hours; and (4) reducing the need for high-cost credit or delay other essential payments in order to cover towing, storage, and alternative transportation expenses.” OLO continues stating that “the Bill would likely benefit some local towing companies by modestly increasing revenues from higher towing and storage fee collections on direct household redemptions.” OLO does caveat that the bill may increase legal and administrative costs for these towing companies. Due to the positive anticipated economic impact, OLO does not recommend any related amendments to the Bill.

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.

SUMMARY OF JOINT COMMITTEE WORKSESSION – APRIL 15

Participating in the Joint Committee discussion from the Executive Branch was the Office of Consumer Protection (OCP), represented by Operations Administrator Shaun Carew and Investigator Lorena Bailey. Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Earl Stoddard also participated in the discussion.

The Committee requested that Council and Executive staff continue to evaluate additional documentation that may be permissible for the release of a vehicle without placing undue discretion on towing staff who must review and verify documents.

The Joint Committee approved, without objection, the following clarifying amendments:

1. Relocating the language was introduced under Bill 14-26 to a new chapter for police-directed tows. The new chapter would be Chapter 30D, Motor Vehicle Towing – Procedures for Police Tow.
2. Documentation should not be limited to a Maryland registration, as an impounded vehicle may be registered in another state. The requirement should instead allow proof of current registration or temporary registration.
 - 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.]]
3. 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.
4. Clarifying that “at least one form of documentation reasonably establishing” is required to demonstrate a shared residence or familial relationship.

5. Aligning indemnification language with state law by referencing a “secured party,” as opposed to the term “agent.”

- Lines 68-74: 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.

The Joint Committee recommended approval (5-0) of Expedited Bill 14-26, as amended.

Next Steps: Whether the Council will adopt the Committee’s recommendation for enactment?

<u>This packet contains:</u>	<u>Circle #</u>
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Expedited Bill No. 14-26
Concerning: Motor Vehicle Towing –
Redemption of Vehicle - Proof of
Ownership or Control (The Vehicle
Recovery Act)
Date: 4/20/2026 Draft No. 4
Introduced: March 3, 2026
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]]**

Chapter 30D, Motor Vehicle Towing – Procedures for Police Tow
Sections 30D-1, 30D-2, and 30D-3

Boldface

Underlining

[[Single boldface brackets]]

Double underlining

[[Double boldface brackets]]

* * *

Heading or defined term.

Added to existing law by original bill.

Deleted from existing law by original bill.

Added by amendment.

Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.

Existing law unaffected by bill.

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

28 **(b)** Scope. This Chapter applies to any tow companies responding to a police
 29 tow request for any participating police department, police employee, or
 30 authorized agency in Montgomery County when the officer or employee
 31 is acting within an official capacity.

32 **30D-2. Definitions.**

33 In this Chapter:

34 Chief means the Chief of Police or a designee.

35 Department means the Montgomery County Police Department.

36 Impounded vehicle means a vehicle towed and stored at the direction of
 37 a Montgomery County police officer, police employee, or code
 38 enforcement specialist from the County's Abandoned Vehicle Section.

39 Participating Agency means a county, federal, state, or city agency or
 40 municipality in Montgomery County that has entered into a
 41 Memorandum of Understanding with the Montgomery County Police
 42 Department, agreeing to abide by the Executive Towing Rules and
 43 Regulations.

44 Police tow means a non-consensual tow. This is a tow constituted when
 45 a Montgomery County police officer or employee, or a police officer or
 46 employee from a participating agency, requests a tow truck and directs
 47 the tow.

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

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

52 Towing company means any individual, partnership, corporation,
 53 association, or other entity authorized by the Chief of Police to tow and
 54 store vehicles at the direction of a police officer or police employee.

55 Vehicle means a device that is able to transport persons or property on a
 56 public highway and is required to be registered pursuant to Title 13 of the
 57 Transportation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended.
 58 Vehicle Owner means the person or persons in whose name the title to a
 59 vehicle is registered.

60 **[[30C-8A.]] 30D-3. Redemption of vehicle – proof of ownership or control.**

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

62 (b)]] Redemption of impounded vehicle.

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

65 (A) either:

66 (i) a U.S. or state government-issued photo
 67 identification; or

68 (ii) a consular registration card from any country
 69 approved pursuant to Section 2-5 of the County
 70 Code; and

71 (B) proof of current vehicle registration [[issued by the
 72 Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, including]] or
 73 current temporary registration card issued to a permanent or
 74 metal registration plate [[documentation where applicable]].

75 (2) Redemption by authorized agent.

76 (A) If the vehicle owner is not present, an impounded vehicle
 77 may be released to an [[authorized agent]] individual who is
 78 not the owner, but who demonstrates that they are
 79 authorized by the owner based upon presentation of:

- 80 (i) a notarized letter signed by the owner authorizing
 81 release and custody of the impounded vehicle to the
 82 named individual; or
- 83 (ii) a letter from an insurance company, lienholder, or
 84 rental car company that indicates the [[agent]] named
 85 individual is entitled to custody of the impounded
 86 vehicle.
- 87 (B) In lieu of a letter under paragraph (2)(A), an impounded
 88 vehicle may be released to a family member or household
 89 member of the owner upon presentation of:
- 90 (i) a photo identification issued by:
- 91 (a) the U.S. or state government;
- 92 (b) a foreign government; or
- 93 (c) a valid nonprofit organization registered in the
 94 state of Maryland; and
- 95 (ii) at least one form of documentation reasonably
 96 establishing shared residence or familial relationship,
 97 which may include:
- 98 (a) a utility or service bill, deed, mortgage
 99 statement, or current lease agreement that has
 100 the same residential address as shown for the
 101 registered vehicle;
- 102 (b) a birth certificate establishing a parent-child
 103 relationship;
- 104 (c) a marriage certificate; or

105 (d) other documentation deemed sufficient by the
 106 towing company, consistent with County
 107 regulations.

108 (C) Indemnification. A towing company must require, as a
 109 condition of release to a person who is not the vehicle owner
 110 or secured party, execution of an indemnification and hold
 111 harmless agreement. The agreement must offer indemnity
 112 by an individual who is not the vehicle owner or a secured
 113 party for the benefit of the towing company on a form
 114 prescribed by the [[Office]] Department, and the agreement
 115 must include indemnification for any claims brought against
 116 the towing company by the vehicle owner or the secured
 117 party in connection with the release of the impounded
 118 vehicle. Such indemnification must not extend to claims
 119 arising from gross negligence or willful misconduct of the
 120 County or towing company.

121 (D) Prohibited conduct. An authorized agent of a vehicle owner
 122 or secured party must not:

123 [[(A)]] (i) falsely state that the owner authorized the
 124 release of a particular vehicle; or

125 [[(B)]] (ii) provide any false or fraudulent information in
 126 connection with redemption.

127 [[(c)]] (b) Enforcement. A violation of this [[Section]] Chapter must
 128 constitute a violation subject to enforcement under Section 30C-12.

129 [[(d)]] (c) Regulations. The rules and procedures of this Chapter related to
 130 police towing are set forth in COMCOR 30C.00.02 {Executive Towing
 131 Rules and Regulations}.

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

135 **Sec 3. Sunset.** [[Section 30C-8A]] Chapter 30D must expire 4 years after its
136 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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Economic Impact Statement

Montgomery County, Maryland

Bill 5-26, Police – Mask or Facial Coverings – Prohibited (The Unmask ICE Act)

Summary

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) cannot determine whether Bill 5-26 would impact economic conditions in the County, as measured by the Council's priority economic indicators. The Bill proposes to prohibit federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from wearing masks or other face coverings while on duty in the County. If enacted, it is uncertain whether the County could enforce the law due to ongoing legal battles over the constitutionality of state and local mask bans.¹ Moreover, even if the Courts decide in their favor, the Trump administration may simply not comply with mask bans, as administration officials have already signaled.²

However, if the Bill is enforceable and limits federal immigration enforcement activities in the County, it would positively impact economic conditions in the County, as detailed in the [Economic Impact Statement](#) for a recently introduced legislation (Bill 3-26) that would limit ICE activity locally. In this analysis, OLO concluded that any policies that restrict these activities would:

- Reduce the risk of sudden loss of income and averting high out-of-pocket costs for certain undocumented residents, thereby supporting household incomes and preventing families from falling into deeper financial distress;
- Support local businesses—particularly in the construction and accommodation and food services/arts/entertainment industries—by preventing the loss of experienced workers, thereby helping employers avoid the high costs of recruitment and training while maintaining consistent productivity and service quality; and
- Potentially protect the wages of certain U.S.-born workers by mitigating the negative economic spillovers typically associated with large-scale deportations.

Background and Purpose of Bill 5-26

Jurisdictions and states around the country—such as the City of Denver, the State of California, and the State of Virginia—have introduced or passed legislation banning local, state, and federal law enforcement officials from wearing a mask while on duty.³ The Maryland General Assembly also recently introduced legislation that would ban law enforcement officials from wearing masks on duty.⁴

¹ Bridget Lavender, "[Explainer: Can States Prohibit Federal Law Enforcement from Masking on the Job?](#)" State Democracy Research Initiative, University of Wisconsin Law School, January 29, 2025.

² Sarah Fortinsky, "[DHS says ICE won't comply with California ban on agents wearing masks](#)," The Hill, September 22, 2025.

³ [WUSA9, "Maryland lawmakers propose ban on police masks amid immigration crackdown", January 15, 2026.](#); [California Legislative Information, SB-627 Law enforcement: masks, Effective September 20, 2025.](#); [PBS, "Q&A: Denver Councilmember on the Effort to Unmask ICE Agents", January 26, 2026.](#); [WRIC, "State lawmaker introduces bill to unmask ICE in Virginia", November 25, 2025.](#)

⁴ [Maryland General Assembly, SB001 - Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings, Introduced January 14, 2026.](#)

According to its lead sponsor, the purpose of Bill 5-26 is to “strengthen community safety by ensuring residents can clearly identify law enforcement.”⁵ Bill 5-26 would ban federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from wearing masks or other face coverings while on duty in the County. Exceptions to this ban include:

- Medical-grade masks that are surgical or N95 respirators designed to prevent the transmission of airborne diseases;
- Masks designed to protect against exposure to smoke during a fire;
- Masks that are necessary to perform duties during a water rescue operation;
- Masks related to protection against exposure to biological or chemical agents during an incident where such agents may be present;
- Masks designed to protect against exposure to cold during a declared weather emergency; or
- Agents on a SWAT team.⁶

The County Council introduced Bill 5-26, Police – Mask or Facial Coverings – Prohibited (The Unmask ICE Act), on January 20, 2026.⁷

Information Sources, Methodologies, and Assumptions

As required by Section 2-81B of the Montgomery County Code, this Economic Impact Statement evaluates the impacts of Bill 5-26 on residents and private organizations, using the Council’s priority economic indicators as the measure. In doing so, it examines whether the Bill would have a net positive or negative impact on overall economic conditions in the County.⁸

As explained above, if the Council enacts the ban on federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from wearing masks or other face coverings while on duty in the County, it is uncertain whether the County could enforce the law. There are ongoing legal battles over the constitutionality of state and local mask bans,⁹ and, even if the Courts decide in their favor, the Trump administration may simply not comply with mask bans, as administration officials have already signaled.¹⁰ As a result, OLO cannot determine whether the Bill would impact local economic conditions.

Variables

Not applicable

⁵ [Introduction Staff Report for Bill 5-26, Police - Mask or Facial Coverings - Prohibited \(The Unmask ICE Act\), Montgomery County Council, Introduced January 20, 2026.](#)

⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁷ [Ibid.](#)

⁸ Montgomery County Code, “[Sec. 2-81B, Economic Impact Statements.](#)”

⁹ Bridget Lavender, “[Explainer: Can States Prohibit Federal Law Enforcement from Masking on the Job?](#)” State Democracy Research Initiative, University of Wisconsin Law School, January 29, 2025.

¹⁰ Sarah Fortinsky, “[DHS says ICE won’t comply with California ban on agents wearing masks,](#)” The Hill, September 22, 2025.

Impacts

WORKFORCE ▪ TAXATION POLICY ▪ PROPERTY VALUES ▪ INCOMES ▪ OPERATING COSTS ▪ PRIVATE SECTOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT ▪ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪ COMPETITIVENESS

Residents

Not applicable

Businesses, Non-Profits, Other Private Organizations

Not applicable

Net Impact

Not applicable

Discussion Items

Not applicable

Caveats

Two caveats to the economic impact analysis conducted here should be noted. First, predicting the economic impacts of legislation is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, the multitude of causes of economic outcomes, economic shocks, uncertainty, and other factors. 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.

Contributions

Stephen Roblin, PhD (OLO) prepared this report.