



May 26, 2026

POLICY ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO: Committee of the Whole (COW)

THRU: Kenny Battle
Committee Director

FROM: Alex Hirtle
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-044-2026 Illegal Signage Enforcement Act of 2026

CB-044-2026 (*proposed by*: Council Member Oriadha)

Referred to the Committee of the Whole (COW)

AN ACT CONCERNING ILLEGAL SIGNAGE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2026 for the purpose of strengthening enforcement against the placement of illegal signs and illegal objects in County rights-of-way; requiring public utilities to remove illegal signs and objects placed on their infrastructure in County rights-of-way; increasing and establishing fines to reduce the placement and persistence of illegal signs and illegal objects in County rights-of-way; increasing liability for the placement of illegal signs and illegal objects in County rights-of-way; and generally relating to eliminating illegal signs and illegal objects in County rights-of-way.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact

Expenditures: Modest administrative costs.

Revenues: Possible notable revenue increase.

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Indirect Impact

Potentially favorable.

Legislative Summary

CB-044-2026 was introduced on May 12, 2026, and was referred to the Committee of the Whole (COW). This bill will amend the existing law regarding illegal signs in the County right-of-way by increasing liability for violators, as well as fines. It provides more forceful wording in the Bill by amending the existing text, placing increased liability on violators (for example, replacing the word “presumed” for “deemed”). It also raises the fine for a violation, either for the person who erected or placed the sign or object, or owner of the sign or object. The fine increases from \$100 to \$1,000 for the first violation, \$500 to \$2,000 for the second violation, and from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for the third and subsequent violations.

The Bill also adds responsibilities of public service companies in that they will be required to remove any sign or object placed on its infrastructure in any County right-of-way, which is a violation, after being receiving notice in writing from the County. Failure to remove such sign or object within 48 hours after notice may result in a fine of \$1,000 per sign for the first violation, \$2,000 per sign for the second violation, and \$5,000 per sign for the third and subsequent violations. The public service company will also be liable for all costs incurred by the County to remove such sign or object.

Current Law/Background:

The legislation refers to Subtitle 23, Division 6 (Sec. 23-608 to 610), Illegal signs or illegal objects and Violations and civil penalties. The legislation seeks to reduce the chronic blight of illegal signs and objects that are posted or placed in the County right-of-ways, especially on public utility infrastructure such as telephone poles, power poles, and public street traffic signs.

Resource Personnel:

- Josh Hamlin, Legislative Officer
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Discussion/Policy Analysis:

Empirical evidence throughout the County provides ample indications that illegal signage continues to be a chronic issue within the jurisdiction. This legislation addresses the issue in two ways: first by increasing fines for illegal posting of signs or objects by ten times for the first violation, four times for the second violation, and five times for the third violation. The policy change seeks to decrease violations by the sheer cost of being caught in a violation, whether posting a sign or object, or being the entity advertising on the posted sign. Other cities have raised their violation fines of illegally posted signs, including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which for multiple violations, sets their fines at \$300 for first offense, and \$2,000 for each subsequent offense.¹ The City of Baltimore (Maryland) fines convicted violators of failing to remove an illegal sign after notice with a misdemeanor and up to \$500 per sign.² The second way the legislation addresses the issue is by placing the responsibility of removing signs or objects from public utility infrastructure on the public utility itself, 48 hours after notice. Failure for the utility to carry this out may result in steep fines, starting at \$1,000. A concise check researching this specific fine technique did not reveal any immediate jurisdictions that have codified this relating to local servicing public utilities. However, jurisdictions have expressed power over public utilities, providing authority to deliver public safety, health, and welfare for its citizens.

Finally, it should be noted that the legislation does not address State right-of-ways, which in no less manner is aggrieved with illegal sign and object postings in its road corridors, particularly in our jurisdiction. With resources to police State right-of-ways for illegal signs and objects probably in shorter supply than County authority, it would be prudent for jurisdictional leadership to partner with the State in a collaborative approach to reduce the amount of sign and object litter on State roads in Prince George's County.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Adoption of CB-044-2026 should have a modest negative fiscal impact on the County by the mandated administrative duties cited in the legislation. Additionally, if the County is successful in issuing and having violators pay fines for the violations, the fiscal impact could very well be positive overall in net revenue being over the administrative costs. Note that as of the writing of this report, the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) had not responded to fiscal impact inquiries.

- *Indirect Impact*

Adoption of CB-025-2026 should have a favorable indirect impact by providing a safer environment for the County's right-of-ways with less illegal signs and objects, items which may

¹ City of Philadelphia, Pa., §10-1203 (7)

² City of Baltimore, Md., § 45-7 (b)

distract and/or block drivers and pedestrians from unobstructed visual lines of vision and clear visual road corridors sight.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

Policy Implementation Resource/Project Timeline:

(note- timeline drafted by PAFI Analyst- DPIE did not respond at time of report completion)

Legislative Initiative

Milestone 1 (June/July 2026) – legislation passed and signed by County Executive.

Milestone 2 (Summer 2026) – DPIE begins to set up administrative processes of increased fines and notices to public utilities for posted sign/objects in County right-of-ways

Milestone 3 (Late summer 2026) – 45 days after becoming law, Bill takes effect.

Disclaimer - Relative timeline based on County Agency and OMB input at a point in time.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The proposed Bill shall be effective forty-five (45) calendar days after it becomes law.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach me via phone or email.