



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

April 12, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

FROM: Alex Hirtle 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CR-029-2021 Army Corps of Engineer Assessment and Study

CR-029-2021 (*proposed by:* Council Members Anderson-Walker, Hawkins, Taveras, Dernoga, Harrison, Davis, Glaros, Streeter, Ivey, Turner, and Franklin.)

Assigned to Committee of the Whole (COW)

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING AN ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEER ASSESSMENT AND STUDY for the purpose of declaring the intent of the Prince George's County Council (the "County Council") to request the County to commence a County-wide flooding assessment and mapping study, performed by the Army Corps of Engineers, subject to appropriation, in order to assist the County in updating existing flooding and mapping studies as well as to inform and guide future community planning with updated data and flood-risk metrics that provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of bioretention, sprawl and new development.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Modest additional expenditures will be required if the County commences the requested study.

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Revenues: None

Indirect Impact:

Potentially positive.

Legislative Summary:

CR-029-2021 was introduced on March 23, 2021 and was referred to the Council of the Whole (COW). The Resolution declares the intent of the County Council to request the County to commence a County-wide flooding assessment and mapping study, performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, subject to appropriation, in order to assist the County in updating existing flooding and mapping studies, as well as to inform and guide in future community planning with updated data and flood-risk metrics that provide comprehensive assessment on the impact of bioretention, sprawl and new development.

Current Law/Background:

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (“the Corps”) has the authority to assist state and local governments, and other non-federal entities in assisting with the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources.¹ Typically the studies are only at the planning level of detail, and do not include detailed design for project construction. The studies include water supply and demand, water conservation and environmental conservation, flood damage reduction, among others.²

In 2012, the Department of Environmental Resources (now Department of the Environment) requested assistance from the Corps to conduct a flood risk management study and assess flood risks and management measures to reduce flooding. In large part, it was due to the September 2011 flooding that caused \$30 Million in damage throughout the area. A total of \$426,500 was allocated to that study, of which \$321,500 was actually used to complete it.³ The Department used the remainder as part of the implementation of the Upper Marlboro Flood Damage Reduction Project (UMFDRP), which was part of a larger plan that has successfully reduced flooding issues in the Town of Upper Marlboro and the adjacent area.

¹ <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Public-Services/Planning-Assistance-to-States/>

² IBID.

³ Flood Risk Management Study for Upper Marlboro, Maryland, USACE, Scope Completion Memorandum (Draft) November, 2019.

Resource Personnel:

Hugo Cantu, Policy Analyst, District 8

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

Prince George’s County Government has stormwater projects throughout the County that are used to mitigate the effects of development and an aging infrastructure that generally do not meet current code standards. Storm drain infrastructure repair and stormwater management pond remediation are common tools used to mitigate the County’s flooding concerns, but a lack of resources and modeling that is less than accurate in practical application, as well as higher incidents of heavy precipitation episodes has created increased flooding in the County.⁴

Given the success of the County’s partnership with the Corps, a County-wide stormwater assessment and mapping study and associated comprehensive report of findings and recommendations should provide data that will assist the Departments, Council, and Maryland-National Capital park & Planning Commission in updating existing flooding and mapping studies, provide better information to rank the need for projects within certain areas, and guide future community planning. Additionally, updated flood-risk metrics that provide a comprehensive assessment on the impact of bioretention, sprawl, and new development will provide further guidance for decisions by the Council in its capacity as District Council.⁵

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Adoption of CR-029-2021 will not, in and of itself, have a negative fiscal impact on the County, since it is by its terms a declaration of the Council’s intent to *request* a study. However, should the County undertake such a study, expenditures will increase by the cost of the stormwater assessment and mapping study performed by the Corps. However, some of this cost can be mitigated by partnering with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other entities identifying sources of grants to help cover the cost.

- *Indirect Impact*

Adoption of CR-029-2021 could have a positive indirect fiscal impact by reducing the amount of flooding, and thus reduce future damage by water to commercial, residential, and governmental structures resulting in cost savings to the County for emergency and crisis response. Furthermore, mitigating flooding can incentivize economic development by providing additional assurance to

⁴ Zoom meeting with Storm Drain Management Division of Dept. of Public Works & Transportation, July 2020.

⁵ <https://www.frbsf.org/community-development/publications/community-development-investment-review/2019/october/flood-risk-and-structural-adaptation-of-markets-an-outline-for-action/>

both business persons and homeowners of safety in areas that currently may be more vulnerable to flooding.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

Issues for Committee Consideration:

- The County is under an obligation to pay for a certain percentage of the stormwater assessment and mapping study once it agrees to partner with the Corps on this project.
 - The study by the Corps is detailed at the planning level, and does not include detailed designs for project construction.⁶
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Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

This Resolution goes into effect on the date of its adoption.

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

⁶ <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Public-Services/Planning-Assistance-to-States/>