

# Montgomery legislators to keep most of controversial energy tax increase

By [Victor Zapana](#), The Washington Post. Posted at 05:00 AM ET, May 17, 2012.

The Montgomery County Council will be keeping nearly all of a [unpopular tax increase](#) on fuel and energy use that was set to sunset this year, legislators said Wednesday.

On Thursday, the Montgomery County legislators will announce the results of weeks-long deliberations over the county's \$4.6 billion operating budget and \$4.3 billion six-year capital spending plan.

The budgets are expected to bolster public safety and library service while providing financial support to the Purple Line project and Wheaton redevelopment. Full-time county managers and employees are expected to get a \$2,000 lump-sum bonus, while part-time employees will get a pro-rated amount, county officials said.

Council officials have pledged to keep intact at least 90 percent of the fuel and energy tax increase. If the tax were to sunset entirely, the average annual bill would be \$92 for a household and \$2,772 for a business. But now the bill will be at least \$231 and \$4,233, respectively.

Several business groups and residents have criticized the increase. A coalition of county hospitals said it paid nearly \$2 million because of the increase. But in an e-mail to council members, Ginanne Italiano, the president of the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, said her group would be okay with the council decision if they intend to keep decreasing the tax in the future.

Council officials are also expected to slightly raise property taxes. The owner of a \$250,000 property will see his annual property tax bill increase by \$18 on average. For an owner of a \$1 million property, the bill would increase by \$73. More than 240,000 households will be eligible for a \$692 tax credit to offset some of the burden, county officials said.

Parking rates are also expected to increase. The Ride On monthly pass will increase to \$45 from \$40. The biennial residential parking permit would increase to \$40 from \$35. Short-term parking would increase by 25 cents per hour.

In Wheaton, long-term parking would increase by 15 cents per hour, while monthly parking would increase by \$18 a month. Outside Wheaton, long-term parking would increase by 5 cents per hour, while monthly parking would increase by \$10 a month.