

October 16, 2017

Via E-mail

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As community organizations representing more than 200,000 members across New York City and State, we are concerned and disappointed that you are rolling out the red carpet for Amazon.

Instead of offering financial incentives to a multi-billion dollar company that already has a significant presence in New York, you should push Amazon to be a better corporate citizen and improve how it treats communities and workers. New York communities are facing massive cuts to public goods and services, and working families are struggling to make ends meet. We cannot afford to give away our tax dollars to corporations that don't need them.

Amazon's footprint in New York has grown rapidly in recent years: The company has a large distribution center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and is planning a similar facility in Staten Island, along with a huge new office on the Westside of Manhattan.

If Amazon opens its second corporate headquarters here, it will be one of the largest employers in New York. Nationally, Amazon has received at least \$1 billion in state and local subsidies, but often communities, workers, small businesses, and government revenues are severely harmed by Amazon's expansion.

Consider evidence from an eye-opening recent report, "Amazon and Empty Storefronts": In 2015, Amazon sold more than \$55 billion in retail goods, but avoided paying \$704 million in sales taxes. Amazon sales produced a net loss of more than 200,000 retail jobs, and a loss of more than \$1 billion in revenue to state and local governments.¹

If Amazon is going to continue to grow its operations across New York City and State, it must improve its business model and its treatment of communities and workers. You should be pushing Amazon to make long-term investments in New York that strengthen residents and neighborhoods, instead of undermining them.

To be clear: Amazon should not receive sales tax exemptions, property tax abatements, corporate income tax credits, or any other state or local financial incentives, period.

New York should be setting an example for the rest of the nation to follow. But, your handling of Amazon has not modeled the kind of leadership that New York's communities and workers need and expect.

Now is the moment to step up and hold Amazon to much higher standards. It's time to make it clear that Amazon's business as usual is unacceptable in New York.

Sincerely,

ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York
Alliance For Quality Education

¹ Amazon and Empty Storefronts, 2015 Update (pg. 2): <http://www.civiceconomics.com/empty-storefronts.html>

Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)
Brandworkers
Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ)
CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities
Center for Popular Democracy
Churches United For Fair Housing (CUFFH)
Citizen Action of New York
Community Voices Heard (CVH)
Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE)
Faith in New York (FINY)
Good Jobs First
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ)
Justice League NYC
Make the Road New York
Metro Justice
Mutual Housing Association of New York (MHANY)
National Employment Law Project (NELP)
New York Communities for Change
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)
Open Buffalo
Partnership for Working Families
People's Climate Movement NY (PCM-NY)
Retail Action Project
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
South Bronx Unite
Strong Economy for All Coalition
Voices Of Community Activists & Leaders (VOCAL-NY)
Workers Justice Project

(Updated October 20, 2017)

CC:

Mayor Bill de Blasio
Mayor Byron Brown
Mayor Lovely Warren