

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 20, 2019

Jeffrey Bezos
President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman
Amazon.com, Inc.
1200 12th Avenue South, Suite 1200
Seattle, WA 98144

Dear Mr. Bezos:

We are writing to express concern about new reports that the rate of serious injuries at the Amazon fulfillment center in Fall River, MA is nearly three times higher than the industry average.¹ A new investigation by The Center for Investigative Reporting finds that Amazon's "obsession with speed has turned its warehouses into injury mills,"² a problem that is most pronounced during "Peak"—the period of time from the week before Thanksgiving through Christmas.³ In 2018, more than 20% of reported serious injuries at Fall River took place during this six-week period.⁴ As we near the end of the peak season, we are seeking answers about why so many Massachusetts workers are getting seriously injured at Amazon fulfillment centers, and your plans to prioritize the safety of workers at all of your Massachusetts facilities during your busiest period of the year, and at all other times.

Nearly a quarter of all Massachusetts residents employed by Amazon work at the Fall River facility, which your company refers to as BOS7.⁵ Newly available data from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Form 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses shows that, in 2018, workers at BOS7 sustained dozens of serious injuries including concussions and body sprains/strains, especially back sprains/strains, which required them to take days off or have a temporary job restriction or transfer.⁶

¹ Reveal News, "Find Out What Injuries Are Like at the Amazon Warehouse That Handled Your Packages," Reveal staff, November 25, 2019, <https://www.revealnews.org/article/find-out-what-injuries-are-like-at-the-amazon-warehouse-that-handled-your-packages/>.

² Reveal News, "Behind the Smiles," Will Evans, November 25, 2019, <https://www.revealnews.org/article/behind-the-smiles/>.

³ The Guardian, "'A Sweatshop Firing on All Cylinders': What It's Like to Work at Amazon at Christmas," Anonymous, December 19, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/dec/19/how-your-holiday-shopping-drives-us-amazon-workers-to-exhaustion>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA's Form 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, Year 2018, Establishment: BOS7, Fall River MA, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/6558025/BOS7-2018-300.pdf>.

⁵ The Herald News, "Report: At Falls River's Amazon Facility, 125 Injuries Reported in 2018," Peter Jasinski, December 11, 2019, <https://www.heraldnews.com/news/20191211/report-at-fall-rivers-amazon-facility-125-injuries-reported-in-2018>.

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA's Form 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, Year 2018, Establishment: BOS7, Fall River MA, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/6558025/BOS7-2018-300.pdf>.

We visited the Fall River facility when it opened in 2017 and support Massachusetts residents having access to jobs that pay a minimum of \$15 an hour—and as one of the largest private employers in the city, you have the responsibility to ensure safe working conditions.⁷ While OSHA Form 300 data is only available for BOS7, OSHA records show that an Amazon fulfillment center in Stoughton, MA entered into a settlement last year for a serious safety violation.⁸

Unfortunately, Amazon fulfillment center workers in the Commonwealth are not alone in sustaining high levels of serious injuries; The Center for Investigative Reporting found that, on average, your fulfillment centers have more than double the industry rate for serious injuries.⁹ Workers around the country have spoken publicly about having to meet extreme production quotas for their physically demanding jobs—leading workers to get injured trying to meet the requirements.¹⁰ A former head of OSHA called the risk of work injuries at Amazon fulfillment centers “alarmingly, unacceptably high” and said Amazon “needs to take a hard look at the facilities where so many workers are being hurt and either redesign the work processes, replace the top managers or both.”¹¹

Your company already employs more than 4,000 individuals in Massachusetts, and this year you announced plans to open distribution centers in Holyoke¹² and North Andover.¹³ You are also reportedly considering building a new distribution center in Quincy.¹⁴ In order to better understand your plans to address the high rate of serious injuries at BOS7, and prioritize the safety of Amazon workers as you expand your footprint across the Commonwealth, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions no later than January 6, 2020:

1. Why is the serious injury rate at BOS7 so much higher than industry average?
 - a. What analyses have you conducted to determine why the injury rate is so high at this facility?
 - b. What analyses have you conducted to determine where the most significant safety hazards exist at this facility?

⁷ South Coast Today, “Amazon in Fall River Reports Creating Double the Jobs It Promised,” Peter Jasinski, July 8, 2019, <https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20190708/amazon-in-fall-river-reports-creating-double-jobs-it-promised>.

⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Inspection Detail, Inspection 1292524.015, https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.inspection_detail?id=1292524.015.

⁹ Reveal News, “Behind the Smiles,” Will Evans, November 25, 2019, <https://www.revealnews.org/article/behind-the-smiles/>.

¹⁰ PBS News, “Amazon Doesn’t Report Its Warehouse Injury Rates—But We Have an Inside Look,” Will Evans, November 27, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/amazon-doesnt-report-its-warehouse-injury-rates-but-we-have-an-inside-look>.

¹¹ Reveal News, “Behind the Smiles,” Will Evans, November 25, 2019, <https://www.revealnews.org/article/behind-the-smiles/>.

¹² Mass Live, “Amazon Promises 235 Jobs, \$5.6M in Construction for Holyoke Distribution Center,” Jim Kinney, September 5, 2019, <https://www.masslive.com/business/2019/09/amazon-promises-235-jobs-56m-in-construction-for-holyoke-distribution-center.html>.

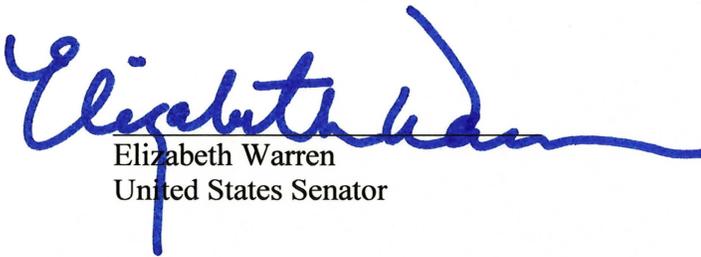
¹³ Boston 25 News, “Amazon to Open Distribution Center in North Andover,” May 28, 2019, <https://www.boston25news.com/news/amazon-to-open-distribution-center-in-north-andover/953156624/>.

¹⁴ The Patriot Ledger, “Officials: Amazon Eyeing West Quincy Property,” Mary Whitfill, December 15, 2019, <https://www.patriotledger.com/news/20191215/officials-amazon-eyeing-west-quincy-property>.

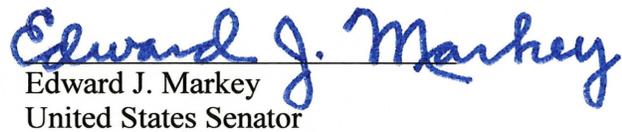
- c. How do you use injury and illness reporting data to identify problems and make changes at Amazon facilities?
 - d. What other methods do you use to iteratively evaluate the safety of workers at your facilities, and what is your process for making changes in response to those evaluations?
2. What was the serious injury rate at BOS7 during the most recent peak period ending in December 2019? How did this compare to injury rates for each of the last three years?
3. What changes are you going to make or have you made at BOS7 to identify and address the high rate of serious injuries?
4. What are injury rates at other Amazon fulfillment centers in Massachusetts?
 - a. Please provide a list of all Amazon fulfillment centers in Massachusetts, and the number of workers at each of those facilities.
 - b. What was the serious injury rate at each of these facilities in each of the last three years including 2019, for the full year, and during the peak season?
 - c. Please provide the most recent OSHA Form 300 for each of these facilities.
5. How does Amazon consider worker safety in the development of production quotas for fulfillment or distribution center workers?
 - a. Has Amazon conducted overall or site-specific studies for different job positions to determine quotas that ensure the safety of workers performing those jobs?
 - b. If not, what data is Amazon using to determine production quotas for workers?
 - c. If production quotas are revised, how is worker safety considered?
 - d. Have you considered revising your production quotas in response to the high rate of serious injuries sustained by workers at your fulfillment and distribution centers?
6. What is Amazon's safety training protocol at BOS7 and other Amazon fulfillment and distribution centers in Massachusetts?
 - a. How does Amazon account for an influx in part-time workers in ensuring robust and appropriate safety training?
7. How does Amazon support workers who suffer serious injuries and illnesses on the job?
 - a. How and when do you notify workers of their rights under state law?
 - b. What are your policies guiding when and how long workers are away from work, or receive a job transfer or restriction?

- c. What rehabilitation do you provide for workers who suffer serious injuries or illnesses while on the job? What are your policies governing this? How do you ensure they are adequately enforced at every facility?

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress