



Open Letter to Amazon.com

Mr. Jeffrey Bezos  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon.com  
440 Terry Avenue North  
Seattle, Washington 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos:

On behalf of the residents of New Jersey, we laud you for the thoughtful process and expansive criteria in choosing a new city for your second headquarters. Like many communities across the nation, we welcome you as a neighbor, and invite you to consider Newark, New Jersey as your second home, but more importantly, we urge you serve as an agent of progress, investment, and equitable growth in the Garden State. As such, we ask that you forego costly economic tax incentives and instead locate in New Jersey for our state's educated workforce, transportation hubs, and quality of life. Deferring these incentives will allow Newark and the state to make critical public investments that will allow both Amazon and New Jersey to thrive in their new partnership.

Unlike New Jersey's outgoing Governor, Chris Christie, your planning board has shown great foresight as it searches for a location for your second headquarters. Beyond the lure of easy tax breaks that drain state coffers and create a rapid race to the bottom, your list of criteria spans the key issues workers and employers alike depend on: affordable housing, dependable public transportation, and a strong K-12 and higher education system that prepares the workers and creators of tomorrow. New Jersey's history of investing in these critical areas would ensure the future prosperity of your business and our state should you choose to locate here.

Strategically located between New York City and Philadelphia, New Jersey has a history of creativity and innovation. New Jersey was home to Thomas Edison when he invented the lightbulb and made the world's first movie, Albert Einstein as he led the Institute for Advanced Study, and Bell Labs where their inventors created the first transistor. New Jersey was Silicon Valley before there was a Silicon Valley. And just as New Jersey's prime (pun intended) location spurred growth and innovation in years past, it continues to do so today.

Already the densest state in the nation, New Jersey is remarkably diverse, and Amazon would benefit from our population that hails from more than 125 countries. Our cities are undergoing a renaissance, with young professionals flocking to Newark and its adjacent communities for jobs

in the technology, engineering, law, and business service sectors. The city boasts a vibrant population from across the globe, and a deep history of art, music, and local activism. Newark is home to the largest array of colleges in New Jersey, the largest transit hub in the state, an international airport, and the principal shipment container port in the New York City metro region. It is no coincidence that Newark is already home to major corporations Prudential, Panasonic, IDT, and Audible, a subsidiary of Amazon.

Since life is comprised of work and play, we're glad to note that Newark enjoys close proximity to two distinguished cities - New York and Philadelphia - and if we can reinvest in public transportation, visiting these from your New Jersey headquarters will be a breeze. If natural spaces are more your cup of tea, you are but a stone's throw from the world famous Jersey Shore, which, thanks to the tireless efforts of advocates and activists, remains pristine for now. It's also worth noting the Garden State's rich cultural, historical, and ecological attractions, including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, McCarter Theatre, the Pinelands National Reserve, and the vibrancy of many small downtowns throughout our state.

Despite the obvious appeals of the Garden State, we must apologize for our outgoing governor and his ham-handed attempt to lure you with billions in economic incentives. Amazon's second headquarters, wherever it may be, will rely on public investments in infrastructure, housing, and community development to support the influx of new jobs and residents you would attract. Governor Christie has not fully fleshed out how the state would make these investments while foregoing billions in tax revenue. This is not surprising, as in his eight years in office, the governor has run a high-stakes shell game with our state budget, draining state coffers to give benefits to the wealthiest residents and corporations while cutting needed services for the rest of us. Should you locate in Newark, strong public investment will be critical to ensuring a strong and mutually beneficial relationship.

There is no question that partnering with Amazon would be a boon for New Jersey, and we believe your business would benefit from locating in the heart of the Eastern corridor. Please do place your second headquarters in Newark, but not if it curtails our state's abilities to make further investments in transportation, education, environmental protection, and affordable homes – key areas that will benefit both your business and the residents of New Jersey. Should you come here, we ask that you reconsider the economic incentives offered by the state, and ensure your second headquarters isn't at the expense of New Jersey's working families. Come to New Jersey because of our pool of skilled workers, the rich cultural amenities, acclaimed school systems, proximity to major metropolitan areas, and the various and sundry other reasons that make New Jersey a prime state when it comes to quality of life. Let's grow together!

Sincerely,

Better Choices for New Jersey

*Better Choices for New Jersey is a diverse coalition, convened by New Jersey Working Families Alliance, that advocates on issues concerning the state budget and fiscal choices of the state. Our partners represent a broad a diverse set of interests, as our members include faith-based groups, labor organizations, and advocates in areas such as public education, the environment, social justice, poverty alleviation, housing, and much more.*

Better Choices for New Jersey includes:

*Action Together New Jersey  
AFSCME New Jersey  
BlueWaveNJ  
Clean Water Action  
Council of NJ State College Locals - AFT  
CWA District 1  
Environment New Jersey  
Food & Water Watch, New Jersey Chapter  
Health Professionals and Allied Employees  
Healthy Schools Now  
La Casa de Don Pedro  
Latino Action Network  
National Association of Social Workers, New Jersey  
National Organization for Women, Northern New Jersey Chapter  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Education Association  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
New Jersey Industrial Union Council  
New Jersey Work Environment Council  
New Jersey Working Families Alliance  
Our Children / Our Schools  
People Demanding Action, New Jersey Chapter  
Progressive Democrats of America, New Jersey Chapter  
Save Our Schools March  
Sierra Club, New Jersey Chapter  
Union of Rutgers Administrators, AFT Local 1766  
V Rev. Peter Anthony Baktis, Mother of God Orthodox Church - Princeton*