



New York City Government Must Scrutinize Amazon's Distribution Centers

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Across New York City, Amazon's footprint is rapidly growing. In 2018, Amazon operated only three e-commerce distribution centers in the five boroughs. Now, Amazon is on track to operate 14 e-commerce distribution centers here, with no current oversight from our city government.

That's wrong and must change. Amazon has a well-documented history of abusing and harming its workers, especially those employed in its e-commerce distribution centers. Elected officials in New York City must take action to ensure that local residents employed in Amazon's e-commerce distribution centers are not at risk of injury, exploitation, or even death.

These facilities are generally currently considered "warehouses" for zoning purposes and as a result are built as-of-right throughout the city. But Amazon's e-commerce distribution centers are nothing like traditional warehouses. They should be scrutinized much more closely by our city government.

The horrific working conditions and grueling production quotas make Amazon's distribution centers among the most dangerous places to work. Here in New York City, this disturbing trend will only get worse unless city government action forces Amazon to make significant changes to how it operates its distribution centers. Improvements to how Amazon runs its distribution centers can lead to improvements at similar facilities run by other companies across our city.

And let's be clear: it's not just Amazon's employees who are mistreated and endangered right now. It's also the local communities where Amazon decides to open its distribution centers. There can be hundreds or even thousands of truck and car trips each day to and from these facilities, causing untold amounts of traffic, pollution and other negative community impacts including pedestrian death.

Whether it's through land use, economic development, procurement, investigations, or environmental review, city government has multiple mechanisms and levers of power to make Amazon meet higher standards for how it treats distribution center workers and communities.

That's why we're calling on all 2021 electoral candidates in New York City to sign this pledge.



The Pledge

As a New York City candidate running for office in 2021, I pledge to do the following if elected:

- Support investigations by city government into how Amazon's distribution centers may be harming workers, local communities, the environment, infrastructure, and small businesses;
- Reform the city's land use and economic development processes to ensure that distribution centers are no longer classified or zoned as mere "warehouses" that can be built as-of-right; and instead require a meaningful process with community input, to assess and address the harmful health, transit, climate and other impacts of siting warehouses and distribution hubs in any location impacting New Yorkers;
- Support the creation of a new code of conduct that Amazon and other e-commerce corporations must adopt as part of the land use and economic development approval process. The code of conduct would address job quality, workplace safety, the right to join a union, community safety, environmental impacts, surveillance, and data collection.
- Bar Amazon and other monopoly corporations from competing for city contracts unless they adopt codes of conduct in all of their businesses and related operations to protect workers, communities and small businesses.
- Support new laws blocking corporations from collecting and selling consumer data and worker data for profit;
- Support the creation of a city board of workers and worker advocates with specialized technical expertise - to determine and implement new protections for e-commerce distribution and delivery workers against surveillance, data scraping, algorithmic discrimination, and dangerous rate of work standards on the job.

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