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Contact: mediacenter@freeandfairmarketsinitiative.org

What They're Saying About Amazon's Long Island City HQ2 Announcement

"I also don't understand why a company as rich as Amazon would need nearly \$2 billion in public money."

New York Post Editorial Board: "Sure looks like Amazon's Jeff Bezos just fleeced Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio as rubes."

"New York is offering vastly more than Virginia for its half of the new Amazon headquarters. What's up with that? The city and state ponied up nearly \$3 billion in grants, credits and so on over 25 years. Down south, Amazon is getting \$573 million plus \$195 million in infrastructure upgrades. Sure looks like Amazon's Jeff Bezos just fleeced Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio as rubes." (Editorial Board, New York Post, "[The Amazon deal is no win for New Yorkers](#)," 11.13.2018)

Governor Cuomo and New Yorkers paid "more than twice what the other supposed headquarters are paying."

"A company like Amazon could present an opportunity to collect more taxes to fix the crumbling foundation. Instead, Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio made a deal with Jeff Bezos that cost the city more than twice what the other supposed headquarters are paying." (Cale Guthrie Weissman, Fast Company, "[New York got played by Amazon](#)," 11.13.18)

Virginia taxpayers paid "about half of the \$61,000 per job that Amazon said it will receive from New York to create the same number of jobs at the site in Long Island City in Queens."

"Virginia's state and local governments agreed to shell out as much as \$796 million in tax incentives and infrastructure improvements over the next 15 years in exchange for 25,000 well-paying tech jobs. That works out to just under \$32,000 per job — about half of the \$61,000 per job that Amazon said it will receive from New York to create the same number of jobs at the site in Long Island City in Queens." (Spencer Soper, Ben Brody and Henry Goldman, Bloomberg, "[At \\$61,000 Per Amazon Job, New York Pays Twice What Virginia Does](#)," 11.13.2018)

Local New York politicians are outraged over the agreement "reached behind closed doors and so far without local input."

"Still, the agreement, reached behind closed doors and so far without local input, has angered officials. Part of the reason is that, according to the broad contours of the plan, the state and the

city will bypass the City Council, which has the power to block rezoning and land-use measures. They will instead employ a state-level process previously used for large-scale development projects, such as Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn and Hudson Yards on the Far West Side of Manhattan.” (J. David Goodman, The New York Times, “[Amazon Is Getting at Least \\$1.7 Billion to Come to Queens. Now Comes the Fight Over Whether It’s Worth It.](#),” 11.13.18)

New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson: Why does Amazon need “\$2 billion in public money for its expansion plans at a time when New York desperately needs money for affordable housing, transportation, infrastructure and education.”

“Amazon is one of the richest companies in the world, but you can’t put a price on community input, which has been missing throughout this entire process. I find that lack of engagement and the fact that the negotiations excluded the City Council – which is elected by New Yorkers to guide land use projects with communities in mind – extremely troubling. I also don’t understand why a company as rich as Amazon would need nearly \$2 billion in public money for its expansion plans at a time when New York desperately needs money for affordable housing, transportation, infrastructure and education.” (Corey Johnson, “[Statement by Speaker Corey Johnson Re: New York City’s Site Selection for Amazon HQ2](#),” 11.13.18)

State Senator Michael Gianaris and New York City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer: “We were not elected to serve as Amazon drones.”

“Corporate responsibility should take precedence over corporate welfare ... We were not elected to serve as Amazon drones. It is incumbent on us to stand up on behalf of the people we represent and that’s what we intend to do.” (Jimmy Van Bramer Twitter, [@JimmyVanBramer](#), 11.13.2018)

United States Representative-Elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY 7): Why does Amazon need billions “when our subway is crumbling and our communities need more investment.”

“Amazon is a billion-dollar company. The idea that it will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks at a time when our subway is crumbling and our communities need more investment, not less, is extremely concerning to residents here.” (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Twitter, [@Ocasio2018](#), 11.13.18)

New York State Assemblyman Ron Kim: Use the billions being offered to Amazon to cancel student debt.

“Instead of giving billions to #Amazon, if we use that money to #cancelstudentdebt, the ROI to our local economy (jobs, GDP, more circulation of wealth) would be tangibly greater.” (Ron Kim, Twitter, [@ronkim](#), 11.13.18)

New York State Senator Michael Gianaris: “Amazon duped New York into offering” billions in corporate handouts.

“We are witness to a cynical game in which Amazon duped New York into offering unprecedented amounts of tax dollars to one of the wealthiest companies on Earth for a promise of jobs that would represent less than 3% of the jobs typically created in our city over a 10-year period.” (Thomas Barrabi, FOX Business, “[Amazon ‘duped’ New York into ‘bad deal’ for new HQ, local politicians say](#),” 11.13.18)

New York State Senator Michael Gianaris: Amazon’s deal is shrouded in secrecy.

“There’s no discussion of what Amazon is going to do to help the city they want to set up shop in.” (New York Post Editorial Board, “[New Yorkers deserve answers about Amazon’s plans](#),” 11.13.18)

New York State Senator-Elect Julia Salazar: Amazon is taking valuable resources that could be used for housing, education or infrastructure.

“Every year, American cities and states spend up to \$90 billion in tax breaks and cash grants to urge companies to move among states. That’s more than the federal government spends on housing, education, or infrastructure.” (Julia Salazar, Twitter, [@JuliaCarmel](#), 11.13.18)

New York State Senator Catharine Young: Upstate New York “families decimated by job losses and lack of opportunity” while Amazon gets billions.

“Today we received the devastating news that Erie County manufacturer New Era Cap will close its Derby plant in March, putting over 200 workers out on the street. Contrast this with today's news from the other side of the state, that Long Island City in Queens will become the site of one of Amazon's highly publicized ‘HQ2’ operations ... Overburdened New York taxpayers, particularly those in upstate who are seeing their communities and families decimated by job losses and lack of opportunity, have every right to be outraged by this massive giveaway.” (Gloria Pazmino and Dana Rubinstein, POLITICO New York, “[Cuomo, de Blasio ring in Amazon deal as critics weigh in](#),” 11.13.18)

Robert B. Engel, Free & Fair Markets Initiative Chief Spokesperson: Amazon’s expansion into Long Island City will displace “people who built these communities”

“What's going to happen to the long-term residents, the people who built these communities, that made them what they are today, that developed the culture of these communities?” Engel said. “We know what's going to happen to them. They're going to be displaced now.” (Marielle Segarra, Marketplace, “[What will Amazon HQ2 mean for rents in Long Island City?](#),” 11.13.18)

Association for Neighborhood Housing and Development: HQ2 “is one of the largest mega-projects in New York City’s history without any public process.”

“The promised job growth and supposed positive impact of Amazon’s expansion to New York don’t outweigh the major infrastructural, housing, and equity challenges it is sure to bring. A deal created to fund one of the largest mega-projects in New York City’s history without any public process, input, or deliberation not only disempowers the very communities that will be most impacted, but entirely erases their agency and their voices.” (Diana Budds, Curbed NY, “[Amazon HQ2 won’t help New York’s massive inequality problem](#),” 11.13.18)

Jonathan Westin, New York Communities for Change Executive Director: Instead of giving Amazon billions in corporate handouts, “Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio should do more to fix our broken subway system and crumbling public housing.

“Instead of giving massive subsidies to Amazon, Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio should do more to fix our broken subway system and crumbling public housing. Public resources should be invested in local communities and in public assets, not in a massive corporation like Amazon that will do more harm than good. Amazon will accelerate gentrification and lead to rising rents and the loss of small businesses. When tech and e-commerce companies like Amazon receive public subsidies, low-income people of color and public housing residents rarely get hired. We stand with Queens residents, including many NYCHA residents, in calling on Cuomo and de

Blasio to say no to Amazon.” (Diana Budds, Curbed NY, “[Amazon HQ2 won’t help New York’s massive inequality problem.](#)” 11.13.18)

Jose Ortiz, Jr., NYC Employment and Training Coalition Executive Director: Amazon’s promises for investments in workforce development merely “a drop in the bucket.”

“Jose Ortiz, Jr., executive director of the NYC Employment and Training Coalition, said \$15 million for workforce training is a “drop in the bucket” for what is needed. Even a 10th of the subsidies offered to Amazon would have been better directed toward city-run job-training and development, he said.” (Katie Honan, The Wall Street Journal, “[Critics Say Amazon’s HQ2 Deal Shortchanges New Yorkers](#)” 11.13.18)

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The Free & Fair Markets Initiative (FFMI) is a non-profit coalition of businesses, consumer advocacy groups, workers and community activists committed to scrutinizing and highlighting emerging market trends that are stifling competition and innovation, influencing federal and local government spending, putting consumer data in harm’s way and limiting consumer choice. For a list of members, please visit <https://freeandfairmarketsinitiative.org/about-us/members/>. For more information on the Free & Fair Markets Initiative, please visit <https://freeandfairmarketsinitiative.org>.