



Dear Amazon shareholders:

Amazon, while earning record profits in recent years, has poured billions into developing robots and artificial intelligence. But the company has failed to invest in the human workers who have helped make Amazon's growth possible, resulting in a steady stream of troubling reports about conditions inside the company's warehouses.

We at the Free & Fair Markets Initiative (FFMI) are calling on Amazon shareholders meeting this week in Seattle to directly address the human toll of Amazon's march to automation and are demanding company executives correct course.

Specifically, FFMI is calling on shareholders to demand that Amazon do more to:

- Improve safety protocol in company warehouses
- Respect the privacy rights of workers
- Provide additional support and training for workers

Workers Speaking Out

Amazon's tunnel vision on robots has had a devastating impact on its warehouse workers and delivery drivers.

The horror stories from Amazon workers have gotten worse and worse in recent years, from workers urinating in bottles and enduring suffocating temperatures to suffering serious injuries and even death. Conditions have gotten so bad that 911 calls have become commonplace.

A Dangerous Precedent

Amazon's lack of self-reflection and accountability on these issues creates a dangerous precedent in an economy where automation will be a top priority for almost all major companies in the decades to come: that investment in robots will inevitably come at a grave cost to human workers. We must reject the idea that a company as rich and powerful as Amazon cannot expand automation and improve conditions for workers at the same time.

The scale of the Amazon labor problem cannot be overstated. With Amazon operating 151 fulfillment centers, airport hubs, and cross decks as well as 119 sortation centers and delivery stations across the United States, the company's obsession with robots while treating workers as disposable is nothing short of an emergency.

Demanding Change

Safety

All Amazon workers – whether they are fulfilling orders in a warehouse or delivering packages – deserve a safe work environment. Workers should never have to work in excessive heat or meet unreasonable physical labor demands. When conditions are unsafe, workers should be able to report concerns internally or file complaints with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) without fear of being terminated as a result of speaking up.

Privacy

Amazon must also do more to recognize the privacy rights of workers, who should not be subject to biometric surveillance. The fact that Amazon patented a wristband that would alert warehouse supervisors when workers take a breather or go to the bathroom is a clear sign of where Amazon's machine mentality will lead us if the company continues to advance a culture that doesn't value and appreciate employees.

Training

Instead of offering to pay disgruntled workers to quit, for example, Amazon could consider providing the support and training workers need to build stable, good-paying careers in an economy that requires continual reskilling. But all signs point to the company continuing down the same reckless path.

A Breaking Point

The unfortunate reality is that Amazon executives will continue to shrug off scrutiny over its abandonment of workers unless insiders demand meaningful change. In the past, CEO Jeff Bezos has dismissed mounting public scrutiny as “a natural piece of being a large corporation.”

FFMI is calling on shareholders to stand up for real change.