

**NIAGARA COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PUBLIC HEARING FOR AMAZON.COM SERVICES, LLC**

**AUGUST 3, 2022
2:00 P.M.**

Taken at: Town of Niagara Hall

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SUSAN LANGDON
Executive Director
Niagara County Industrial Development Agency
Appearing as Hearing Officer

ATTENDANCE NOTED ON ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEETS

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1 **MS. LANGDON:** Good afternoon.

2 Welcome. This public hearing is now open. It is
3 2:02 p.m.

4 My name is Susan Langdon. I am
5 the Executive Director of the Niagara County
6 Industrial Development Agency, and I will be the
7 hearing officer for this public hearing.

8 Please note that, as I just
9 mentioned, if you wish to speak, you need to have
10 signed the sign-in sheet prior. I will call the
11 speakers to the podium by name when we reach that
12 part of the public hearing.

13 We are here to solicit comments,
14 both written and oral, on Amazon.com Services, LLC
15 and/or individuals or affiliates, subsidiaries, or
16 entities formed, or to be formed, on its behalf.
17 The transcript of this hearing will be reviewed and
18 considered by the Agency in determination of
19 incentives for this project.

20 Notice of this public hearing was
21 published in the Niagara Gazette on July 20, 2022.

22 The notice reads as follows:

23 Notice is hereby given that a public hearing

1 pursuant to Article 18-A of the New York General
2 Municipal Law will held by the Niagara County
3 Industrial Development Agency on the 3rd day of
4 August, 2022 at 2:00 local time in the Town of
5 Niagara Town Hall, 7105 Lockport Road, Niagara
6 Falls, in connection with the following matter.

7 Amazon.com Services, LLC and/or
8 affiliates or -- individuals or affiliates or
9 subsidiaries or entity or entities formed, or to be
10 formed, on its behalf, has submitted an application
11 to the Agency, a copy of which is on file at the
12 office of the Agency requesting that the Agency
13 consider undertaking a project consisting of:

14 (A) The acquisition or retention
15 by the Agency of a leasehold interest in
16 approximately 217 acres of vacant property located
17 at 8995 Lockport Road in the Town of Niagara,
18 Niagara County, New York;

19 (B) The construction of an
20 approximately \$3,000,000 -- 3,000,000 square foot
21 building for use as a storage and distribution
22 facility;

23 And (C) the acquisition and

1 installation around the improvements of certain
2 items of machinery, equipment and other tangible
3 personal property, the equipment, and collectively
4 with the land and the improvements, the Facility.

5 The Agency will acquire a
6 leasehold interest in the Facility, and lease the
7 Facility back to the Company. The Company will
8 operate the Facility during the term of the lease.
9 At the end of the lease term the Company will
10 purchase the Facility from the Agency, or if the
11 Agency holds a leasehold interest, the leasehold
12 interest will be terminated.

13 The Agency contemplates that it
14 will provide financial assistance to the Company in
15 the form of sales and use tax exemptions and a
16 mortgage tax exemption consistent with the policies
17 of the Agency, and a partial real property tax
18 abatement.

19 A representative of the Agency
20 will be at the above-stated time and place to
21 present a copy of the Company's project application,
22 and hear and accept written and oral comments from
23 all persons with views in favor of, or opposed to,

1 or otherwise relevant to the proposed financial
2 assistance.

3 This public hearing is being
4 conducted in accordance with Subdivision 2 of
5 section 859-a of the New York General Municipal Law.
6 Dated: July 14, 2022.

7 The proposed project includes the
8 construction and operation of an e-commerce storage
9 and distribution facility located at 8995 Lockport
10 Road. This site is a vacant 216-acre heavy
11 industrial zoned site that will be considered a
12 first-mile fulfillment center. The facility will
13 receive inbound bulk shipments of products from
14 suppliers, and then send shipments to other
15 facilities within the logistics network for direct
16 shipment to consumers.

17 The applicant's development
18 partner, JB2, received unanimous approvals from the
19 Town of Niagara Planning Board and the Niagara
20 County Planning Board.

21 In addition, the Town of Niagara
22 Board voted unanimously in favor of a negative
23 declaration of New York State Environmental Quality

1 review. Items disclosed -- discussed at these
2 meetings included the consolidation of parcels, a
3 height variance, and traffic mitigation plans as a
4 result of in-depth traffic studies.

5 The Niagara County Industrial
6 Development Agency has received an application from
7 Amazon for tax incentives for the Town of Niagara
8 project. Processing of an application by the NCIDA
9 involves:

10 1) Accepting the application.

11 This was done by the NCIDA Board of Directors at
12 their July 13th meeting.

13 2) Holding this public hearing
14 today. The NCIDA Board will also accept written
15 comments, if they are received by Friday, August
16 5th.

17 And 3) a final vote by the Board
18 to approve or not approve the incentives will take
19 place at the next NCIDA Board meeting, to be held on
20 August 10th.

21 The proposed IDA incentives
22 include three things, in compliance with the
23 Agency's uniform tax exemption policy:

1 Number 1: New York State and
2 local sales and use tax exemption. This will abate
3 the sales tax on construction materials, furniture,
4 fixtures and equipment during the construction phase
5 of the project.

6 Number 2: Abatement of the New
7 York State Mortgage Recording Tax. This New York
8 State fee is three-quarters of one percent of the
9 mortgage filed with Niagara County.

10 And 3: A partial real property
11 tax abatement. The company will pay a set
12 percentage of the property taxes that would normally
13 be due for a period of 15 years. This is known as a
14 Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax agreement, or PILOT
15 agreement.

16 These three things are the only
17 incentives being considered by the NCIDA for this
18 project. They do not represent any payments to
19 Amazon. They do not consist of any county or other
20 municipal grants or loans.

21 Presently, the vacant land that
22 the project will be located on generates \$24,000
23 annually in real property taxes. Once the project

1 is constructed, the taxing jurisdictions will
2 receive over \$49,000.000 in Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax
3 payments over the 15-year PILOT, together with
4 roughly another \$15,000,000 in special district
5 taxes.

6 When the facility goes back on the
7 tax rolls at full valuation at the end of the PILOT,
8 the facility will pay a total of over 9.5 million
9 dollars to the county school district in real
10 property taxes every year. This is a permanent
11 addition to the tax base in not only the Town, but
12 also to Niagara County.

13 Based upon our cost/benefit
14 analysis program, for every \$1.00 in tax incentives
15 provided to Amazon, the local community receives
16 \$11.00 in benefit. The approximately \$124,000,000
17 in incentives will generate approximately 1.3
18 billion dollars in local benefit.

19 As far as the tax incentives, the
20 proposed Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax agreement mirrors
21 the PILOTs for projects in nearby Onondaga and
22 Monroe Counties. Such a PILOT was acceptable to
23 both of those counties, as well as to Amazon. So

1 the IDA feels it makes sense to follow -- follow
2 those leads.

3 The project application, project
4 summary and cost/benefit analysis are posted on the
5 Agency's website at niagaracountybusiness.com, and I
6 have copies with me today up on the front table.

7 We have now reached the public
8 comment portion of the hearing. Comments can be in
9 support of, or in opposition to, the financial
10 incentives being considered by the NCIDA.

11 All comments are to be limited to
12 this project only.

13 The hearing is not for accepting
14 comments on any environmental issues, nor
15 environmental determination, and this is not part
16 of the New York SEQRA process. As I noted earlier,
17 this has already been completed and approved by the
18 Town of Niagara Board.

19 Please limit your comments to no
20 more than three minutes. If your comments are more
21 lengthy, you may submit them in writing to be
22 attached to the transcript. Written comments can
23 also be sent to the Agency until the comment

1 period closes on August 5th. This is not a
2 question-and-answer session or a debate. You may
3 speak only once.

4 I will now call the first speaker.

5 Would Michael Casele please come
6 to the microphone? State your name and address for
7 the stenographer. If you are representing a
8 company, please identify the company.

9 **MICHAEL CASELE:** Thank you.

10 My name is Michael Casele, Commissioner, Niagara
11 County Department of Economic Development. I
12 reside in Lewiston, and work at the Vantage
13 Corporate Center in Sanborn, New York.

14 First, thank you for the
15 opportunity to speak in support of this
16 transformational project. This facility would be
17 one of Amazon's largest and most sophisticated
18 facilities, employing 1,000 people full time.

19 The workers' hourly rates
20 includes full benefits, including health care,
21 401(k)s and company-paid educational programs.

22 Even at the lowest estimates,
23 these 1,000 permanent jobs will equate to

1 approximately \$35,000,000 in salaries to local
2 families alone. And this number does not include
3 the value of the health care benefits provided on
4 the first day. The 1,000 new jobs and the \$15.00
5 an hour starting salary are both very conservative
6 numbers, as per the company.

7 It's important to note that the
8 project will provide jobs and opportunities to those
9 who don't possess specific work skills. Those new
10 to the workforce will have the opportunity to learn
11 new skills on the job, skills that will be
12 transferable for advancement.

13 Amazon's Upskilling programs help
14 employees gain in-demand skill sets to help propel
15 them into new careers. You may have heard of
16 Carrier Choice, Amazon's prepaid tuition program
17 that offers prepaid full college tuition at hundreds
18 of educational institutions across the country.

19 The fact that the Lockport Road
20 facility is along a bus route will provide
21 opportunities for employment for residents of
22 Niagara County that would not otherwise have this
23 opportunity. Frankly, the magnitude of this project

1 will provide employment for all Niagara County
2 residents, and those in surrounding counties.

3 A similar impact is the local
4 construction jobs that the project will create.
5 As we know, due to COVID and other factors,
6 construction jobs over the past few years have been
7 scarce. This project will empty the local Halls,
8 put hundreds to work for two-plus years.

9 Finally, as I had mentioned
10 before, this site has long been targeted for
11 development by both State and local officials.
12 In fact, it was designated a Build Now New York
13 shovel-ready certified site in 2012, a designation
14 that came following a lengthy application process
15 that involved the Niagara County Center for Economic
16 Development and its local partners, with the
17 application being thoroughly vetted by numerous
18 agencies.

19 I like to share this information,
20 because since receiving this designation we have
21 been marketing this site as shovel-ready, which is
22 one of the major reasons that this developer chose
23 this site. No serious site selector would give

1 Niagara County a second look if we do not stand
2 behind the shovel-ready certification. Word would
3 spread fast that Niagara County balked on its
4 promise of being shovel-ready, which would
5 undoubtedly jeopardize our chances in the future to
6 compete for projects that would bring significant
7 new capital investment and new jobs to the Niagara
8 County and its region.

9 Once again, thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak on this transformational
11 project.

12 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.
13 The next speaker is Robert Taylor.

14 **ROBERT TAYLOR:** Yes. My name
15 is Robert Taylor. I live at 8150 Packard Road.

16 For the life of me, I can't
17 imagine why a multi-billion dollar company would be
18 receiving \$123,000,000 in tax breaks for jobs that
19 they already reported that 95 percent of the jobs --
20 reported to the IDA -- will be \$31,200 a year.

21 Those jobs aren't even a
22 sustainable wage. They can talk all they want about
23 their benefits and their this and their that, and

1 all the other nonsense.

2 Amazon has a 150 percent turnover
3 ratio for their employees. It's well-documented.
4 It doesn't take a rocket scientist to go on the
5 internet and find it. They've already reported that
6 by the year of 2024 they will deplete the amount of
7 people that they will be able to hire at their
8 facilities.

9 It's awful ironic that they want
10 all these tax breaks, and they're going to finance
11 \$500,000,000 of the \$550,000,000, or numbers in that
12 vicinity. Why don't they use their own money?

13 Why aren't they bringing anything
14 to this town, that they're going to disrupt probably
15 for the next 30 years? What are they giving the
16 Town of Niagara? We're giving everything to them.
17 We're receiving nothing, except traffic and just a
18 headache. I just -- I just think it's ludicrous.

19 I think it's great for jobs, if
20 they were sustainable jobs. Whoever made the
21 comment, this is the biggest job since the Niagara
22 Power Project, they shouldn't even have the position
23 to even make a statement like that. This job

1 doesn't compare to the Niagara Power Project.

2 The average salary at the Power Project is

3 \$75-to-\$90,000 a year, not \$31,200.

4 They talk 401(k). Where you gonna
5 get a 401(k)? Who's going to be able to take any
6 money out of a \$31,000-a-year job to put money into
7 a 401(k)? So Amazon can match, what, maybe their 20
8 bucks that they might have extra in their paycheck
9 that they can put out there?

10 These number are ludicrous. It
11 would be fantastic if this was a sustainable job for
12 all the union people.

13 I'm a retired union man myself.
14 I'm retired from the Carpenters Union. This would
15 be a great project if it was 100 percent union,
16 which it probably will not be.

17 But in the end of it, the jobs
18 are \$31,200 a year. And we're going to kiss the
19 company's rear end. They should be kissing our
20 rear end to come in this community.

21 And I'm sorry that our Town Board
22 and everybody else thinks this is the greatest
23 project. I wish they did their homework a little

1 bit longer, because this is not a great project.

2 It is not a sustainable wage.

3 Thank you, folks.

4 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Ken Jonmaire.

6 **KEN JONMAIRE:** Good afternoon.

7 My name is Ken Jonmaire. I have three properties on
8 Packard Road.

9 I've lived in Western New York all
10 my life. I'm over 70 years old. And I've seen the
11 decline of Bell Aerospace, the Summit Park Mall,
12 the Helicopter Reserve Base at the Air Base,
13 chemical plants in Niagara Falls.

14 And I think about President Biden
15 and President Trump all saying that we need to bring
16 jobs back to America. And certainly, I think that
17 this would help to bring jobs back to Niagara
18 County.

19 I know that we -- we -- everything
20 taken is some kind of sacrifice to somebody. But
21 we need to revitalize the area, and to my mind it's
22 important.

23 I don't know about tax breaks.

1 Smarter people than me know about how tax breaks
2 work and who should deserve them, and things like
3 that.

4 But I do say that we need to do
5 things to revive the county and bring it back
6 into -- into a vibrant tourist and other
7 manufacturing county. Thank you.

8 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.

9 Next speaker, Lynn Brooks.

10 **LYNN BROOKS:** Hello. My
11 name is Lynn Brooks. I'm from OPEIU Local 153 out
12 of New York City.

13 Our concern is if Amazon is making
14 a sincere effort to give fair wages. I can go to
15 McDonald's; I can go to Arby's; Wegmans; I can make
16 \$15.00 an hour. They're not giving a fair wage with
17 a union job.

18 With union jobs you have spot
19 checks. You have people that can make sure that
20 there's a proper work environment.

21 This is disgusting. With how much
22 money this company has, to say \$15.00, an average
23 salary, \$32 -- \$31,000. You can't live off of that.

1 This is a union town, union
2 community. For them not to even consider going
3 union, I have a problem with that. And we want it
4 noted that union should be building; union should be
5 doing the work within Amazon. You might have a more
6 sustainable company that really can flourish going
7 forward. Thank you.

8 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

9 Next speaker, Donna Amos.

10 **DONNA AMOS:** Good afternoon.

11 I also am a member of Local 153.

12 I've been at my place of
13 employment for 50 years. I've been an active member
14 of the union for 50 years.

15 To try to raise a family on \$15.00
16 an hour is literally impossible. I feel for the
17 people who have lived in this area, and I understand
18 change is hard to accept. However, if you are being
19 paid a wage that you can live on and grow your
20 family, you will have a better business, and people
21 will stay there.

22 I've been at my place for 50
23 years. If they were not paying me what I deserved

1 and what I needed to raise my family, I would never
2 have stayed there.

3 And that is why Amazon has a big
4 turnover. They cannot retain their employees. And
5 if you don't have happy employees, you don't have a
6 good business.

7 I truly wish that Amazon would
8 think about the people that live in this area, and
9 take into consideration what these people who live
10 here are going to have to go through, and work with
11 them to make it a good environment and a good
12 business in this area. Thank you.

13 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

14 Next speaker, Theodore Getman.

15 **THEODORE GETMAN:** Thank you, My
16 name is Theodore Getman. I live at 2410 River Road
17 in Wheatfield.

18 As I said, I'm a resident of
19 Wheatfield, and I have two children in the
20 Niagara-Wheatfield School District.

21 A recent economic impact study
22 featured in Bloomberg, which is, I think we can all
23 agree, hardly an anti-business publication, studied

1 the impact of corporate tax benefits on nearly 2,500
2 school districts in the United States. 97 percent
3 of them forgone -- gave up revenue greater than
4 \$5,000,000 as a result of these tax breaks. On a
5 per-pupil basis, 149 of these districts lost more
6 than \$1,000 per student. These subsidies eat into
7 school budgets or result in tax increases.

8 In 2020, 24 percent of
9 Niagara-Wheatfield students or families lived in
10 poverty, compared to 15 percent statewide.
11 Niagara-Wheatfield already spends \$5,000 less per
12 pupil than the state average in New York, according
13 to data at NYSED.org. Can Niagara-Wheatfield School
14 District afford to spend less per student?

15 Some today are going to say
16 without tax increases Amazon's not going to come
17 here -- or tax incentives, Amazon won't come here.
18 To them, I cite the same Bloomberg article.

19 A prominent tax incentive
20 researcher, Michael Farren from George Mason
21 University, said subsidies do not create growth.
22 The trade-offs that occur result in higher taxes
23 or reduced services, or both. Investing in

1 education increases returns of better productivity.
2 Any dollar spent on education will have a larger
3 impact over the long run than any dollar spent on
4 any business incentive.

5 So we have a choice; we can raise
6 taxes, lose services, or worse yet, both due to the
7 lost tax revenue, or continue to invest in education
8 and other services for our children.

9 I hope the group here considers
10 this. Otherwise, our children might not have any
11 other choice other than the unskilled labor at
12 Amazon for their future, due to the corporate tax
13 bailouts that you're going to give to these -- to
14 Amazon today. And I echo everyone who spoke of
15 their union. Thank you.

16 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

17 Next speaker, George Maziarz.

18 **GEORGE MAZIARZ:** Thank you
19 very much. My name is George Maziarz. I live in
20 Lockport, New York.

21 First of all, there are nine
22 members on the IDA Board of Directors. How many
23 members of the IDA Board are here today to hear the

1 public hearing, to hear the public comments about
2 this project that they're going to be voting on one
3 week from today? How many members? Bill Ross
4 and -- I'm sorry, sir, I don't know your name.

5 **SCOTT BRYDGES:** Scott Brydges.

6 **GEORGE MAZIARZ:** Scott. Two
7 members out of nine.

8 Ultimately, the Niagara County
9 Legislature appoints the members of the IDA Board,
10 the nine-member board. How many Niagara County
11 legislators are here today? None.

12 Let me first start off first by
13 saying, it's insulting -- not from you, Susan -- but
14 it's insulting from the Agency to have a public
15 hearing on a major project that's going to affect
16 the lives of people, neighborhoods in Niagara
17 County, at 2:00 on a beautiful August afternoon.

18 I'm asking you, number one, to
19 reschedule another public hearing in the evening
20 when more people can attend, when it's more
21 convenient for people to attend.

22 Next -- next, I'd like to
23 apologize on behalf of Jeff Bezos, the owner of

1 Amazon. Jeff couldn't be here today. He's on his
2 \$500,000,000 yacht in Amsterdam. He apologizes.
3 But he thanks you for the tax break, by the way.

4 You know, what Mr. Taylor said up
5 here and this gentleman -- I'm sorry, I didn't catch
6 your name -- said is absolutely true.

7 You know, just last year in Erie
8 County, not 10 miles from here on Grand Island, they
9 had the same proposal, and they were getting zero
10 tax breaks. Zero. They were going to pay full
11 property taxes.

12 They had a signed written
13 agreement with the County Executive that they were
14 going to use union labor to build the facility by
15 local union contractors.

16 Does such an agreement exist
17 with the Niagara County IDA or the Niagara County
18 Legislature?

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's not
20 true.

21 **GEORGE MAZIARZ:** What?

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They
23 weren't going to make that agreement at Grand

1 Island.

2 **GEORGE MAZIARZ:** Mark -- I can
3 reference you to statements that Mr. Poloncarz made
4 and the Town Supervisor of the Town of Grand Island.

5 **MS. LANGDON:** Pardon me. We
6 can't have a debate. Please just speakers. Continue.

7 **GEORGE MAZIARZ:** Okay. You
8 referenced, you know, other counties where they got
9 tax incentives. They'll go anywhere to get tax
10 incentives.

11 Amazon wants to be here. They
12 want to be close to the airport. They want to be
13 close to the Canadian border. They have to be here.
14 And they can well afford to pay their full property
15 taxes. We should not be giving them tax breaks.

16 What this gentleman talked about,
17 the labor issue; Amazon has spent millions of
18 dollars in New York City and in Alabama fighting
19 labor unions. Do you think they're going to help
20 you? Do you think they're going to help you? No
21 way it's going to happen.

22 Their wage structure actually
23 starts at around \$15.00 an hour, as Mr. Taylor, I

1 think, pointed out.

2 On my way here I went by two
3 electronic billboards. One said we need to get
4 your children and grandchildren to school. We need
5 school bus drivers. \$23.50 an hour, and they can't
6 find them.

7 The Seneca Nation has an
8 electronic billboard. It says we have open
9 interviews from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday
10 through Thursday every week, immediate hiring,
11 immediate openings. They can't find enough people.

12 Where's Amazon going to get 1,000
13 people at \$15.00 an hour? It's not going to happen.
14 It's not going to happen.

15 You know, one thing, Susan, that
16 you didn't talk about were the fees that the IDA
17 Board gets for this project, the legal fees that
18 politically connected lawyers get from the bond
19 counsel and for all those things. None of that is
20 ever revealed publically.

21 I would encourage IDA members to
22 reveal that, to put that information out there so we
23 can see who is personally profiting from a project

1 like this.

2 Again, I'm going to ask that this
3 Board schedule another public hearing in a place
4 where there's more parking, by the way, and that
5 they do it in the evening when people can come here
6 and ask -- ask questions and get answers.

7 I think it's -- I'll say this,
8 I think it's insulting that you have a public
9 hearing -- I've been in government for 40 years,
10 attended a lot of public hearings, a hell of a lot
11 of public hearings, and public hearings are for
12 exchange of information, to answer questions. You
13 know, when you start a public hearing off by saying
14 we're not going to answer any questions, you know, I
15 just think that's insulting to the audience,
16 insulting to the taxpayers who ultimately are going
17 to be paying the bill for this. Thank you very
18 much.

19 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.

20 I just want to comment that this
21 public hearing is being live-streamed, and also,
22 we're getting the transcript, verbatim, for the
23 Board of Directors, and we also accept written

1 comments, which will also be forwarded to the Board
2 of Directors before they vote at the August 10th
3 meeting.

4 Next speaker, John Scherrer.

5 **JOHN SCHERRER:** Hello. Thanks
6 for letting me speak. My name is John Scherrer.
7 I'm the business manager of IBEW Local 237 in
8 Niagara Falls.

9 The last two projects of this
10 magnitude that Amazon has built, in Syracuse, and
11 the last one in Rochester, have both been good for
12 the IBEWs of Syracuse and of Rochester.

13 I'm confident that the -- my union
14 will be represented and do the work on this job. So
15 I stand here to support it. It's going to be a lot
16 of work for my members, that's going to be
17 good-paying jobs with benefits.

18 One comment on what a previous
19 speaker was saying. I don't believe not having the
20 work is going to cut down on the rate of pay. If
21 they need to hire 1,000 people, they're going to pay
22 what they're going to need to pay to get 1,000
23 people. \$15.00 is a relative number. Why are the

1 people paying 20 bucks an hour for bus drivers or
2 \$23 at Seneca? Because they need people.

3 You bring in 1,000 more jobs,
4 there's going to be more competition. The rate of
5 pay is going to go up. That's just simple
6 economics.

7 That's all I have to say.

8 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.

9 Next speaker, Tom Weber. Tom
10 Weber.

11 **TOM WEBER:** Hello there.
12 Tom Weber, Packard Road.

13 Contrary to some beliefs from
14 other people and some other reporting that's been
15 done, I am for Amazon to come. But my first thing
16 in the first meeting was, I want them to do it
17 right, and I want them to do it safely.

18 First thing that I've got to say,
19 yeah, I agree about having another open meeting at
20 the right time. This is lousy, because the people
21 that actually get dirty and actually work for a
22 living and pay their taxes can't be here, because
23 they're obligated to be at work. So this is very

1 unfair to them, which is part of the public of the
2 town that's going to get -- the county is not going
3 to get affected by this. We're going to take the
4 whole heat for everybody in this whole area.

5 Now, I'll just say, I'm a traffic
6 person. So this is about safety. I've sent plenty
7 of pictures, other comments, the Town knows about
8 it. The shoulders aren't wide enough. This is a
9 Class 16, I believe. Our minor arterial road is
10 Packard. Our traffic should be going down Lockport
11 Road or Porter Road, which is basically part of the
12 highway system.

13 I think everybody's really just
14 stuck their head up their behinds and looked the
15 other way when it comes to our children and
16 everybody else, and the other traffic that's been
17 going on for years here. It is a problem. It's
18 been a problem. It's a safety issue.

19 And now, what we're going to do is
20 just put a Godzilla more of traffic right on top of
21 Porter and Packard and Military. It makes no sense.
22 You can only fit so many fish in a fishing net.

23 I'm not sure what else to say.

1 But I think we need a real traffic study done the
2 right way, and that should be documented before they
3 get their Certificate of Occupancy for this place.

4 They can build. They can still
5 come here.

6 But guess what? If you really do
7 your homework, they've done exactly that; built,
8 done everything, and still not even opened up a
9 warehouse, and screwed everybody for all the taxes
10 that they been promised.

11 And Grand Island was going to get
12 a bribe -- oh, no, excuse me, I don't mean a bribe,
13 I mean an incentive of 10,000,000.

14 We've got the railroad. We've got
15 the airport, and we've got Canada. We need to get
16 off the 190 here, put on -- let our state put their
17 asses together, and get some money together --
18 they've got two whole years -- and put a ramp up on
19 Lockport Road and keep everybody safe.

20 I'm done. Thank you.

21 **MS. LANGDON:** Next speaker,
22 Jim Maltry. Is it Malloy or Maltry? Jim, sorry,
23 I can't read your writing.

1 **JIM MALTBY:** Sorry, Maltby.

2 **MS. LANGDON:** Okay.

3 **JIM MALTBY:** I'm Jim

4 Maltby. I'm the President of the Insulators Union;
5 represent the members from Buffalo and Niagara
6 Counties.

7 We could certainly use this
8 project. As one of the members said, construction
9 been's pretty slow the last few years.

10 The project in Syracuse and the
11 one recently in Hamburg has used my members. And
12 so we're for project. That's it.

13 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.

14 **JIM MALTBY:** Thank you.

15 Next speaker, Matthew Hubacher.

16 **MATTHEW HUBACHER:** Good

17 afternoon. Matthew Hubacher. I'm the
18 Vice-President of Research at Invest Buffalo Niagara
19 in Buffalo, New York. I appreciate the opportunity
20 to deliver these comments on behalf of our president
21 and CEO, Tom Kucharski.

22 As Western New York's private,
23 non-profit economic development organization, Invest

1 Buffalo Niagara's mission is to facilitate business
2 attraction and expansion efforts that create and
3 retain jobs, increase capital investments across the
4 eight counties of our service territory.

5 Invest Buffalo Niagara wishes to
6 share their support of the benefits Project Fifi
7 represents, and recommend the NCIDA Board to advance
8 the project's application for tax incentives.

9 After several years of limited
10 investment, the transportation and warehousing
11 sectors of the regional economy are lagging the
12 nation. Based on data from the Western New York
13 Industrial Real Estate Development Strategy, a
14 comprehensive report commissioned by Invest Buffalo
15 Niagara, and delivered by a consultant team from
16 Newmark, only one in five local transportation and
17 warehousing jobs are in sub-sectors growing faster
18 than the country. Newmark estimates the regional
19 economy to be deficient by 1,500 transportation and
20 warehousing jobs. Project Fifi helps reverse that
21 trend.

22 The direct jobs associated with
23 the project will provide upskilling and training to

1 members of the community who are underemployed,
2 looking for new opportunities and career
3 advancement, or exited the labor force during the
4 global pandemic.

5 At 62.5 percent, Buffalo Niagara's
6 labor force participation rate trails several
7 competitive peer regions, as well as the nation.
8 Job opportunities through Project Fifi will foster
9 re-engagement with those looking for work
10 opportunities, and foster skill support and
11 on-the-job training, while providing competitive
12 wages and salaries, along with benefits.

13 Having worked with Amazon on
14 several projects across Western New York, Invest
15 Buffalo Niagara knows firsthand the company
16 continues to invest in the community beyond its
17 significant job creation and capital expenditures
18 through training and tuition reimbursement programs,
19 K-12 education STEAM and STEM program investments,
20 support and engagement with the military veteran
21 community and health care assistance through the
22 Amazon Cares program.

23 Invest Buffalo Niagara commends

1 Niagara County's and the Town of Niagara's
2 commitment to, and leadership on, this important
3 economic development project. The project is
4 certainly an affirmation of the investments Niagara
5 County has made to become a first-class place to do
6 business. Thank you.

7 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.
8 Next speaker, Anthony Casilio.

9 **ANTHONY CASILIO:** Good day.

10 My name is Anthony Casilio. I reside at 7005
11 Sunnydale Drive, Niagara Falls, New York.

12 First off, I initially was going
13 to come up and ask questions, and now you say I
14 can't do that. So I'm going to try to transform
15 my questions into comments, and hopefully, I can
16 do that properly.

17 I wanted to start off by restating
18 or supporting the comments made by Mr. Maziarz and
19 the other gentleman, that it is truly unfair to have
20 this meeting at this time. There are people that
21 are working and who have, you know, tax dollars
22 coming into this and, you know, potentially a
23 benefit, significant issues, and they can't be here

1 to say what they want to say.

2 I also think it's unfair that I
3 can't ask questions, because I don't sit around
4 watching -- or reading IDA documents all day long.
5 Be nice to know and get some details.

6 My concern, and I, again, haven't
7 read the documentation, is that -- well, first off,
8 I think that Amazon needs this. So why are we
9 giving them incentives in the first place? I think
10 that it's somewhat of an atrocity that that is
11 happening.

12 But if these incentives are going
13 to be given to them, then I would like to know, and
14 I hope, I guess, that they aren't significant to cut
15 into what we would have otherwise received in the
16 town, in the county and in the school district,
17 because they are all entities that need to recoup
18 and generate more tax funds.

19 I'm particularly disturbed when I
20 hear that other areas did not give any tax breaks,
21 and still have the program, or Amazon has interest
22 in their facilities and locations.

23 One last thing, because my problem

1 has been traffic more than any other, because I live
2 in a development that will now be surrounded by 493
3 trucks coming in, 493 trucks going out. That's not
4 counting any cars from employees who are going to be
5 coming in, any miscellaneous trucks.

6 I've just heard that they lease
7 out their facilities. So there'll be trucks coming
8 in from other companies. The traffic on
9 Porter/Packard will be unbelievable.

10 We are now told that they'll be
11 exiting down Lockport Road. That will completely
12 surround that community.

13 At least if some of these tax
14 incentives can be reduced to the point where we can
15 dedicate \$10,000,000 to putting in an exit and
16 entrance ramp at Lockport Road, or at least Lockport
17 Road could be expanded. There's less housing there.
18 Maybe we can buy out the people who are there to
19 expand the roads.

20 It's going to be a dangerous
21 situation, in my opinion. And I think that this tax
22 incentive is misdirected. Thank you.

23 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

1 Next speaker is Mark Jurenovich.

2 **MARK JURENOVICH:** Good afternoon.

3 My name is Mark Jurenovich. I, too, am with OPEIU
4 Local 153. I rise in opposition to this project.

5 When is all of this corporate
6 welfare going to be exposed for what it really is?

7 I see Dave McKinley's here from
8 Channel 2. It's probably still on their website.
9 I read it last night. They did a story on the
10 Amazon building in Hamburg. It's empty. There's
11 nothing in there; no packages, no employees, it's
12 crickets. The town wants to know what's going on
13 with the \$6,000,000 it gave in order to have that
14 project built and located in the Town of Hamburg.

15 I'm a trade unionist. I follow
16 what's happening in the labor movement. And right
17 around Christmas there was an election in New York.
18 An independent union called the Amazon Employees
19 Labor Union won an election to represent the
20 employees that worked at the facility in New York.

21 Amazon's behavior during that
22 campaign was nothing short of what I would call
23 reprehensible. Their conduct in the workplace,

1 you folks know what those kinds of meetings are
2 held; captive audience meetings where the employer
3 brings you into a room and asks you about your
4 feelings on the union, why you're supporting the
5 union.

6 Numerous charges were filed with
7 the National Labor Relations Board. They've all
8 been upheld.

9 There were union activists
10 involved in that campaign who were terminated by
11 Amazon. Now, the National Labor Relations Board --
12 it's been a few months, but they're getting around
13 to it -- those employees are now starting to be
14 returned to work with back pay.

15 Now, the union has an obligation
16 to bargain. They've asked Amazon to come to the
17 table. Yeah, they're there. But they're doing
18 what's commonly known as surface bargaining; they're
19 there, they're listening, they're not making any
20 proposals, they're receiving what the union gives
21 them. And they told the union, nothing you have is
22 guaranteed; not your hourly rate or your benefits,
23 you've got to bargain from scratch.

1 We don't want that kind of
2 behavior here. We think we're better. We think
3 we're better. And I strongly urge this Board to
4 give this more thought.

5 Senator -- and George, you will
6 always be our senator -- made a great comment about
7 the location, the time. This meeting can be
8 rescheduled. It could be held in the auditorium up
9 at Niagara-Wheatfield High School, which is the
10 school district where this proposed project is going
11 to be built, in the evening, adequate parking so
12 many more people can attend. Thank you.

13 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you.

14 Next speaker, Connor Mauch.

15 **CONNOR MAUCHE:** Hi.

16 **MS. LANGDON:** Hi.

17 **CONNOR MAUCH:** Thank you for
18 having me. My name is Connor Mauche.

19 Does it help if I hold this?

20 **MS. LANGDON:** Either put
21 your face closer or hold it.

22 Can you give us your address?

23 **CONNOR MAUCHE:** Yeah. 242

1 Richmond. I live in Buffalo, New York.

2 I was a previous employee of
3 Amazon. I was employed in 2019 at the Lancaster
4 location.

5 I can speak to it as being one of
6 the poorest times of my life as an employee of
7 Amazon. The expectations that Amazon has of its
8 workers and the --

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Excuse
10 me. Could you please pick up the microphone and
11 hold it to your mouth?

12 **CONNOR MAUCHE:** Yeah.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm sorry
14 for interrupting.

15 **CONNOR MAUCHE:** No. No. Thank
16 you. Thank you, sir. So I was previously employed
17 at Amazon.

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** A lot of
19 us are old, and we can't hear.

20 **CONNOR MAUCHE:** But I worked
21 there in 2019, and it was one of the poorest times
22 in my life.

23 I understand, you know, from the

1 building trades, why, you know, you think it would
2 be good for your members. But I think you're being
3 offered a very -- maybe a golden goose. But the
4 long-term consequences of what this facility will be
5 for the community, I do not think has a positive
6 effect.

7 I think for the guys like me who
8 have to go work on the floor -- the guys who built
9 it, they're going to get great benefits in terms of
10 getting -- but the people who are going to have to
11 stay and work at this place, it sucks.

12 And I was also joined by another
13 Amazon worker who I know, and he's currently going
14 through all the exact same union busting that, you
15 know, they have to deal with there. And it's going
16 to just come straight back down into your community.

17 As much as it might be good for
18 your union, you have to think about everybody here.
19 I'm a member of Workers United, and I do not see
20 this as a deal that is good for the county, for
21 workers. I think it's something that should be
22 rejected, or at minimum that the tax incentives that
23 are being offered Amazon are not nearly anywhere

1 beneficial to the community.

2 Just looking at say, Niagara
3 County, the average wage is \$55,522.00, which comes
4 out to just under \$30.00 an hour in the county. An
5 IT company's living wage for two working adults with
6 two children is at just over \$23.00 in Niagara
7 County. So the average wage for transportation and
8 warehouse work is \$45,081.00.

9 Amazon is only offering an average
10 of 18 hours across this facility, without even
11 accounting for the fact that many of these jobs will
12 be part time and flex hours.

13 So that means when I was working
14 there, yeah, I was making \$15.50 an hour. How many
15 hours was I actually really getting?

16 You know, I had to, you know,
17 scrape together change to get gas money to go to
18 work. I was -- I couldn't get my car inspected
19 because I couldn't afford to fix it. So I had
20 to drive illegally to get to my job.

21 This is the kind of workforce you
22 are expecting in your community. You should reject
23 it. That's all.

1 **MS. LANGDON:** Thank you, sir.
2 That concludes our public comment
3 period.

4 I will now adjourn the meeting at
5 3:48 p.m. Thank you very much for coming.

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SIGN IN SHEET FOR SPEAKERS

PUBLIC HEARING

August 3, 2022 at 2 p.m. - Town of Niagara Hall

regarding:

Amazon.com Services LLC and/or Individual(s) or Affiliate(s), Subsidiary(ies),
or Entity(ies) formed or to be formed on its behalf

Name	Company and/or Address	X box to speak/ comment
Michael A. Casale	Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development	X
ROBERT TAYLOR	8150 PACKARD RD	
KEN LOWMAIRE	7016 PACKARD	✓
Lynn Brooks	OPEIU Local 153	X
Donna Amos	OPEIU Local 153	X
Theodore Getman	2410 Liver Rd N.Y. - NY 14204	✓
George Maziarz	6905 Ridge Rd. Lkpt	X
John Scherrer	IBEW Local 237 6700 Schultz St. N.Y. NY 14204	X
TOM WEBER	PACKARD RD	X
Scott Bridges		
Jim Malloy	HEAT & Frost Insulators union	X
MATTHEW HUBACHER	INVEST BUFFALO NIAGARA	X

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or Entity(ies) formed or to be formed on its behalf

Name	Company and/or Address	X box to speak/ comment
Anthony Casilio	Resident 7005 Sunnysdale Dr NE NY 14304	X

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regarding:

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or Entity(ies) formed or to be formed on its behalf

Name	Company and/or Address	X box to speak/ comment
MARK JURGENOVICH	07E1 U	X

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or Entity(ies) formed or to be formed on its behalf

Name	Company and/or Address	X box to speak/ comment
Connor Manche	242 Richmond Ave Buffalo	X