



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

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THIRTEENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
FINANCE
COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

January 5, 2015

Mr. Jeffrey Bezos
Amazon.com, Inc.
1200 12th Ave. South, Ste. 1200
Seattle, WA 98144-2734

Dear Mr. Bezos:

We write regarding the Amazon data center proposed for a commercially zoned area in Haymarket, Virginia. Its location is not normally zoned for data centers, and this has caused significant, unified community opposition from an unusual alliance of environmentalists, Civil War Hallowed Ground advocates, homeowners and major business developers.

The opposition does not center on the presence of an Amazon data center, but rather on the adverse impact which the new high voltage lines required to serve the data center, will have on residences, historic designated areas, and significant future economic development.

In the mid 1990's, the Disney Corporation withdrew its proposal to build a history-based theme park in Haymarket despite having the overwhelming support of then-Governor George Allen, the General Assembly, and the business community. Their dramatic withdrawal followed sustained adverse publicity from concerned citizens.

Dominion Power has told our community that the Amazon data center on John Marshall Highway is too far away from industrial areas currently served by 230 KV lines, so Dominion must construct new 230 KV overhead power lines with 100-120 foot wide rights-of-way for structures 90-120 feet high in neighborhoods and areas never designated for such power lines.

The Amazon data center required zoning changes to locate in a commercial area. The County recently accepted a public easement to preclude an earlier power-line route for Amazon in response to community concern. But the new route has only served to further inflame community opposition. Citizen concern has been augmented by County officials' secretive dealings and their refusal to acknowledge that Amazon is the likely owner of the data center and the customer for the new 230 KV transmission lines.

Routine Freedom of Information requests for site plan information have been refused. Regardless of the reason for the lack of transparency, the interests and investments of homeowners, preservation groups and major business developers should not be ignored. Awareness of the most recent power line corridor revision has largely occurred because of grassroots outreach, not because Dominion or Prince William County informed the public.

In our judgment, the root problem is the Haymarket location for the Amazon data center. This is because it is neither located in an industrial area, nor is it located within existing power line

corridors. We hope to preclude future impacts when the 2015 General Assembly convenes in mid-January, and we urge you to seriously consider two alternatives to address the present controversy:

First: There is industrial-zoned property a few miles from the Haymarket parcel called “Innovation Park” where Virginia’s George Mason University is located. The large business area has swift and easy access to Interstate 66, and is serviced by rail. Data centers exist at this location, and there is adequate acreage and capital infrastructure for the Amazon data center.

Second: Undergrounding the 230 KV power lines to the Haymarket parcel could resolve the growing controversy. Virginia law would spread the cost of burying the transmission lines among Dominion’s rate payers across Virginia.

While Dominion prefers building overhead lines, the State Corporation Commission required Dominion to bury five miles of transmission lines in northern Stafford County several years ago. We make our request on behalf of our constituents who are adversely impacted by the location of Amazon’s data center and its proposed power lines. (We are not Realtors, do not own property in Innovation Park, and will not seek options on such property.)

Placement of new power lines where none were ever proposed or existed previously, changes the rules in the middle of the game. This is not fair to residents, nor to major business enterprises which have invested in land for economic development. It is also unfair to preservationists concerned with protecting Hallowed Ground near the Manassas Battlefield.

We appreciate that you must make a business decision that rewards Amazon stockholders. We hope you will see that forcing construction of massive 230 KV power transmission lines through neighborhoods in order to serve your data center is not good business, because of the negative impact on so many residents, organizations and business interests.

Big government and big business should be good neighbors. We are sure that you would feel the same way if you were “surprised” by massive power lines where you live. Please exercise good will by seeking a home for your Amazon Data Center at “Innovation Park” or at another location that would not require major power line placement through established neighborhoods.

Please reject any plan to build your data center at its present location, unless the transmission lines are buried. In the past, Dominion Power has buried some transmission lines in counties, but the final determination for power line placement -- under or above ground--must be formally decided by the State Corporation Commission. You can influence that decision for the well-being of AMAZON and our community.

Sincerely,



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Senator Richard Black
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