

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

March 1, 2019

Jeff Bezos
Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer
Amazon.com, Inc.
410 Terry Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos,

You once wrote that your strategy for philanthropy could be found at the intersection of urgent need and lasting impact, and I am certain that influenced your search for a second headquarters, asking states to think big and creatively for their proposals. Unfortunately, the final decision lacked the forward-thinking that has marked your career. You now have another chance to have a lasting impact on not just a city, but an entire region. What if I told you that there was a location that not only fit much of your criteria but could achieve your philanthropic strategy, too? What if I told you that place was Wild and Wonderful West Virginia?

Let me tell you a little bit about my state. It's said that Mountaineers are always free. We are tough, independent, inventive, and honest, shaped by the wildness of the landscape: our rugged mountains and rushing streams, our emerald green forests. That independent spirit makes us skilled entrepreneurs and hard workers. Our state is also gifted with abundant, affordable, and reliable energy – necessary for cloud computing. We are blessed with ample recreational opportunities through its myriad lakes, state parks, and national forests – critical for healthy employees and work-life balance. We have some of the lowest housing prices and crime rates in the U.S. – essential for the safe communities needed to raise the next generation of Americans. We have more Veterans per capita than almost any state in the nation; we have fought in more wars, shed more blood, and lost more lives for the cause of freedom than most any state. We've always done the heavy lifting and never complained. We've mined the coal and forged the steel that built the guns, ships and factories that have protected and continue to protect our country. On top of that, we have some of the most wonderful people you'll ever meet. In fact, if you're travelling through my little state and you ask someone for directions, they won't just tell you where to go, they'll say, "Just follow me and I'll take you there."

West Virginia also fulfills many of the basic requirements that Amazon laid out in the beginning of its search. Northern West Virginia resides in the Greater Pittsburgh Region, which holds around 5 million residents. In turn, the Eastern Panhandle of the state lies within the Washington Metropolitan Area, which houses a population of more than 6 million. Much of the state is within easy driving distance to several major population centers, as well as multiple international airports. Many of the nation's major highways – including I-79, I-81, I-70, and I-

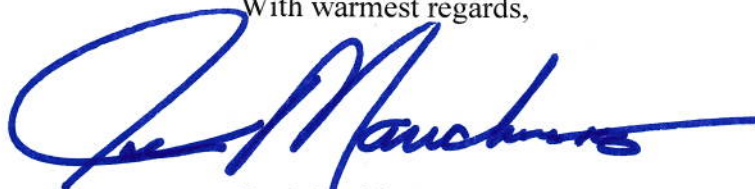
64 – and railways – such as the Amtrak Cardinal, Capitol Limited, and MARC Train – traverse the state.

When I was governor, we set our state on a path for economic growth, making it a business-friendly destination for investment. We lowered our Corporate Net Income Tax, Business Franchise Tax, and others, lessening the tax burden on our businesses by millions of dollars. Those moves have paid off. Over the last decade, our state has seen more than \$15 billion worth of investment from a broad array of industries as many global companies have made the decision to locate and grow in West Virginia. Infor recently made a significant investment in Charleston, WV, while IBM continues to grow in Rocket Center, WV and Toyota has seen multiple expansions at its plant in Buffalo, WV. Your own Amazon Hub in Huntington, WV has been a success, while federal facilities like the FBI Criminal Justice and Information Services (CJIS) Division, NASA Independent Verification & Validation (IV&V) Center, NOAA Environmental Security Computing Center, and the Defense Forensics & Biometrics Agency in the northern and eastern portions of the state have helped to grow a sophisticated workforce necessary for tech companies to thrive.

I won't shy away from the problems that Appalachia faces today. The opioid crisis has decimated some of our communities, and the shift to a 21st Century Economy has left many rural areas behind. But these problems can be overcome, and our small cities – many of them once industrial powerhouses – have incredible potential. Once great factories are now Brownfields sites that could be repurposed more quickly than building from the ground up. Railroads and ports along our rivers could hum once again with shipping traffic. Our local universities and community colleges still produce scores of talented young people who would love to stay and contribute to their beloved home state. And our citizens represent the best of us – they challenge themselves and their communities to be better and get the job done. When things get tough, they get tougher. All they need is the type of investment that has transformed areas like the South Lake Union neighborhood in Seattle, bringing growth and prosperity to more than just the coasts.

Mr. Bezos, my little state could benefit from the type of investment Amazon's second headquarters could bring, and I think Wild and Wonderful West Virginia would contribute more than you could ever believe to your company and your legacy. As West Virginia's senior U.S. Senator, I pledge to assist in any way I can to make this a reality. West Virginia would make an ideal location for Amazon's second headquarters. But don't take my word for it, go to the state and ask anyone. They'll give you the right directions. And they'll take you anywhere you want to go.

With warmest regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator