



1543 Wazee Street  
Suite 460  
Denver, Colorado 80202

Jeff Bezos, Founder/CEO  
Amazon  
410 Terry Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98109-5210  
Dear Mr. Bezos,

TO: Five of the largest platforms and online marketplaces - Amazon, eBay, Facebook, Wal-Mart and Craigslist,

We write in our capacity as state legislators. We want the business community and American consumers to know that we endeavor to balance the twin imperatives of commerce and consumer protection in the marketplace. And, while we appreciate reports of the efforts made by platforms and online retailers to crack down on price gouging as the American community faces an unprecedented public health crisis, we are calling on you to do more at a time that requires national unity. That is why we are reaching out to you as five of the largest platforms and online retailers directly to address this problem.

As COVID-19 spreads throughout the country, it is especially important that Americans are not taken advantage of by unscrupulous sellers of products at exorbitant prices. Unfortunately, independent third-party organizations and journalists have documented multiple examples of price-gouging of items people need to protect themselves since the World Health Organization declared a global health emergency on January 30.

For example:

- On Amazon, [U.S. PIRG Education Fund found](#) that more than half of hand sanitizers and facemasks available spiked by at least 50% compared to the average price. One in six products sold directly by Amazon saw similar price spikes.
- On Craigslist, [someone was selling](#) a two-liter bottle of Purell Advanced hand sanitizer for \$250--ten times the normal price.

- On Facebook Marketplace, an eight-ounce bottle was being [sold for \\$40](#).
- Attorney General offices are also getting reports of alleged price gouging online and at bricks and mortar locations.

While many of these items have since been removed, they were available for sale, and consumers are harmed when they purchase heavily marked-up products. Even new protections by your company including heightened monitoring, bans on certain advertisements, and bans on selling certain items, have failed to remove exorbitantly priced critical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. When consumers are prevented from getting necessities to protect their homes and loved ones, or in this case, help prevent the spread of the virus, consumers suffer not only economic harm, they may suffer serious health consequences as well.

With the pandemic expected to continue, your platform must enact measures to prevent price gouging. We urge you to implement the following measures, or others that your technicians devise, to ensure consumers do not have to worry about being taken advantage of while buying essentials to keep them healthy during emergency situations:

1. **Set hard caps on price increases during emergencies:** Rather than playing whack-a-mole to stop price gouging after it has already occurred, online retail platforms should prevent exorbitant price increases from occurring in the first place by setting and enforcing price increase limits based on a 90-day average of the item's price before an emergency began. Exceptions to these price increases due to increased cost of business for sellers should be proposed to the online retailer and approved only after disclosure of additional costs actually incurred, including the identity of the wholesaler or supplier that levied the increase.
2. **Trigger price gouging protections independent of, or prior to an emergency declaration:** Price gouging on a platform often begins prior to official emergency declarations. The above protections should be triggered when your system detects pricing spikes generally (think of scarcity at a time of recession or stock market crash), or conditions that could lead to price gouging like pending weather events or future possible health emergencies.
3. **Create and maintain a "Fair Pricing" Page/Portal** where consumers can report price gouging incidents to you directly. A simple tool requesting the name of the vendor, the item for sale, the alleged unfair price, and the state of residence of the complainant would quickly and efficiently allow you to identify and freeze or remove truly bad actors and make appropriate referrals for enforcement or prosecution. These complaints should be made available upon request by our Attorney General's office.

Your company has created an important online platform with a team of engineers capable of devising solutions to numerous problems. These are just a few potential solutions, and we hope

your company will put its considerable technological prowess to work implementing these or other solutions to better protect your shoppers.

We believe you have an ethical obligation and patriotic duty to help your fellow citizens in this time of need by doing everything in your power to stop price gouging in real-time. We look forward to your response to this letter and partnering with you to protect our citizens.

Sincerely,

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Representative	Neil	Rafferty	Alabama
Representative	Ivy	Spohnholz	Alaska
Representative	Leo	Biasiucci	Arizona
Representative	Andrés	Cano	Arizona
Representative	Kirsten	Engel	Arizona
Representative	Charlene	Fernandez	Arizona
Representative	Rosanna	Gabaldón	Arizona
Representative	Daniel	Hernandez	Arizona
Representative	Pamela	Powers Hannley	Arizona
Representative	Diego	Rodriguez	Arizona
Representative	Denise	Garner	Arkansas
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Assemblymember	Wendy	Carrillo	California
Assemblymember	Ed	Chau	California
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Senator	Susan	Rubio	California
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Representative	Lamont	Robinson	Illinois
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Representative	Patricia	Hymanson	Maine
Representative	Dennis	Keschl	Maine
Representative	Richard	Pickett	Maine
Representative	William	Pluecker	Maine
Representative	Christina	Riley	Maine
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Representative	Rachel	Talbot Ross	Maine
Representative	Maureen	Terry	Maine
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Senator	Geoff	Gratwick	Maine
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Senator	Linda	Sanborn	Maine
Senator	Eloise	Vitelli	Maine
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Delegate	Lorig	Charkoudian	Maryland
Delegate	Debra	Davis	Maryland
Delegate	Mary	Lehman	Maryland
Delegate	Brooke	Lierman	Maryland
Delegate	Eric	Luedtke	Maryland
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Delegate	Jared	Solomon	Maryland
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Senator	Clarence	Lam	Maryland
Senator	Susan	Lee	Maryland
Senator	William	Smith	Maryland
Senator	Mary	Washington	Maryland
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Representative	Josh	Cutler	Massachusetts
Representative	Paul	Donato	Massachusetts
Representative	Sean	Garballey	Massachusetts
Representative	Tami	Gouveia	Massachusetts
Representative	Stephan	Hay	Massachusetts
Representative	Natalie	Higgins	Massachusetts
Representative	Kathleen	LaNatra	Massachusetts
Representative	David	LeBoeuf	Massachusetts
Representative	Jack Patrick	Lewis	Massachusetts
Representative	Kate	Lipper-Garabedian	Massachusetts
Representative	Adrian	Madaro	Massachusetts
Representative	Paul	Mark	Massachusetts
Representative	Paul	McMurtry	Massachusetts
Representative	Denise	Provost	Massachusetts

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Representative	Lindsay	Sabadosa	Massachusetts
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Senator	Ryan	Fattman	Massachusetts
Senator	Marc	Pacheco	Massachusetts
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Representative	Fue	Lee	Minnesota
Representative	John	Lesch	Minnesota
Representative	Todd	Lippert	Minnesota

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Representative	Tracy	McCreery	Missouri
Representative	Peter	Merideth	Missouri
Representative	Raychel	Proudie	Missouri
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Representative	Renny	Cushing	New Hampshire
Representative	Elaine	French	New Hampshire

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Representative	Lee	Oxenham	New Hampshire
Representative	Mark	Pearson	New Hampshire
Representative	John	Potucek	New Hampshire
Representative	Mark	Proulx	New Hampshire
Representative	Julie	Radhakrishnan	New Hampshire
Representative	Terry W.	Roy	New Hampshire
Representative	Kris	Schultz	New Hampshire
Representative	Kendall	Snow	New Hampshire
Representative	Walter	Stapleton	New Hampshire
Representative	Brian	Sullivan	New Hampshire
Representative	Matthew	Wilhelm	New Hampshire
Senator	Martha	Hennessey	New Hampshire
Senator	Ruth	Ward	New Hampshire
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Representative	Karen	Bash	New Mexico
Senator	Bill	Tallman	New Mexico
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Representative	Marcia	Morey	North Carolina
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Senator	Tim	Mathern	North Dakota

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Senator	Hearcel	Craig	Ohio
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Senator	Kenny	Yuko	Ohio
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Representative	Julie	Fahey	Oregon
Representative	David	Gomberg	Oregon
Representative	John	Lively	Oregon
Representative	Susan	McLain	Oregon
Representative	Tiffany	Mitchell	Oregon
Representative	Rob	Nosse	Oregon
Representative	Mark	Owens	Oregon
Representative	Carla	Piluso	Oregon
Representative	Bill	Post	Oregon
Representative	Karin	Power	Oregon
Representative	Andrea	Salinas	Oregon
Representative	Sheri	Schouten	Oregon
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Senator	Shemia	Fagan	Oregon
Senator	Jeff	Golden	Oregon
Senator	Chuck	Riley	Oregon
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Representative	Frank	Burns	Pennsylvania

Representative	Tom	Caltagirone	Pennsylvania
Representative	Mary Jo	Daley	Pennsylvania
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Representative	Austin	Davis	Pennsylvania
Representative	Ed	Gainey	Pennsylvania
Representative	Joe	Hohenstein	Pennsylvania
Representative	Sara	Innamorato	Pennsylvania
Representative	Jennifer	O'Mara	Pennsylvania
Representative	Eddie Day	Pashinski	Pennsylvania
Representative	Chris	Rabb	Pennsylvania
Representative	Adam	Ravenstahl	Pennsylvania
Representative	Melissa	Shusterman	Pennsylvania
Representative	Pam	Snyder	Pennsylvania
Representative	Jake	Wheatley	Pennsylvania
Senator	Tim	Kearney	Pennsylvania
Senator	Thomas	Killion	Pennsylvania
Senator	Katie	Muth	Pennsylvania
Representative	Dave	Bennett	Rhode Island
Representative	Christopher	Millea	Rhode Island
Representative	Hull	Raymond	Rhode Island
Senator	Frank	Cicccone III	Rhode Island
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Representative	Terry	Canales	Texas
Representative	Vikki	Goodwin	Texas

Representative	Ken	King	Texas
Representative	Ina	Minjarez	Texas
Representative	Lina	Ortega	Texas
Representative	Ron	Reynolds	Texas
Representative	Armando	Walle	Texas
Senator	Judith	Zaffirini	Texas
Representative	Patrice	Arent	Utah
Representative	Suzanne	Harrison	Utah
Senator	Ralph	Okerlund	Utah
Representative	Jim	Carroll	Vermont
Representative	Jean	O'Sullivan	Vermont
Senator	Becca	Balint	Vermont
Delegate	Betsy	Carr	Virginia
Delegate	Mark	Keam	Virginia
Delegate	Kaye	Kory	Virginia
Delegate	Paul	Krizek	Virginia
Delegate	Kenneth	Plum	Virginia
Delegate	Roslyn	Tyler	Virginia
Senator	Jennifer	Boysko	Virginia
Senator	Ghazala	Hashmi	Virginia
Senator	Dave	Marsden	Virginia
Representative	Cindy	Ryu	Washington
Delegate	Sammi	Brown	West Virginia
Senator	Senator Sue	Cline	West Virginia
Assemblyperson	Jimmy	Anderson	Wisconsin



Representative	Jill	Billings	Wisconsin
Representative	Amanda	Stuck	Wisconsin
Representative	Lisa	Subeck	Wisconsin
Senator	Tim	Carpenter	Wisconsin
Representative	Jim	Roscoe	Wyoming
Representative	Andy	Schwartz	Wyoming
Representative	Michael	Yin	Wyoming
Senator	Mike	Gierau	Wyoming