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Westborough Legislators Urge Pause on Amazon Drone Delivery Proposal

Letter highlights community concerns about Amazon Prime Air service at Westborough fulfillment center

(BOSTON 9/29/2026) — This week, three Massachusetts legislators representing Westborough sent a letter to Amazon urging the commercial giant to engage in a more robust community dialogue and to better address residents' concerns about its proposed Amazon Prime Air drone delivery service – the first of its kind in the Commonwealth. Echoing the hundreds of constituents who attended the company's September 23rd community meeting to express their serious questions about the noise, safety, and privacy concerns that overhead drones raise, the legislators asked the company to pause its implementation plans in Westborough until it fully addresses these questions. Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury), Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), and Representative Kate Donaghue (D-Westborough) highlight that Amazon has for years operated its facility in the town with the trust and support of the community, and urge Amazon to addresses the concerns of their constituents before moving forward.

Planned to operate out of the company's existing 200,000 square foot Otis Street fulfillment center, Amazon says Prime Air would be able to deliver items under 5lbs to Westborough and 15 surrounding communities in as little as 30 minutes using its fleet of commercial drones. Amazon states that it hopes to eventually make up to 1,000 deliveries per day to addresses within a 7.5-mile radius of its fulfillment center.

"There is a distinct difference between operating delivery trucks on our neighborhood streets and flying dozens of camera-equipped drones in the skies above our homes. The people who live in these communities have important questions about how Amazon plans to operate its drones safely, quietly, and in a way that respects their privacy – and so far, many of these questions remain unanswered," said **Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury)**. "Amazon's footprint in Westborough has been a net positive for the town and surrounding communities, but the fulfillment center's success is the result of a strong and ongoing partnership with its neighbors and local officials. On its current path, Amazon Prime Air threatens this partnership by violating this trust the company has built. I hope that Amazon will take the time to listen to the concerns of residents and

thoughtfully address them so that we can continue this partnership with trust and mutual respect long into the future."

"Prime Air's potential impact on the quality of life in Central Massachusetts is a concern I share with my constituents and legislative colleagues," stated **Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury)**. "Shrewsbury and Westborough residents have been clear in their reservations about how these drones will affect their privacy and noise levels in their neighborhoods, as well as safety and environmental issues. People living in communities within Amazon's range need to be able to trust that their questions will be answered, and I urge Amazon to listen to residents and address these issues before moving forward."

"Westborough residents are concerned about noise levels, privacy, safety and more. Reports from people living near launch areas in other parts of the country indicate significant issues regarding noise. Many residents have expressed serious concerns regarding the environmental impact of drones on wildlife, especially birds," said **Representative Kate Donaghue (D-Westborough)**. "I am hopeful that Amazon will continue to be a good partner to the people of Westborough and the surrounding area."

Amazon Prime Air currently operates in 13 cities in 10 states, but the company has laid out an aggressive expansion roadmap that intends to serve over 500 communities with drone delivery by the end of the year. Prime Air drones typically fly up to 74 miles per hour and cruise to their destination at between 205 and 370 feet above the ground, before descending to 13 feet to drop the package on the customer's property. Amazon states that the drones are loudest during takeoff and landing, but that the sound at cruising altitude is comparable to an electric toothbrush held at arm's length when heard outdoors.

Designed to operate in wind, rain, and snow, Prime Air drones are said to include redundant propellers that can keep them airborne if one fails. They are equipped with cameras for navigation and collision avoidance, but Amazon claims that all image data is encrypted and that Amazon does not sell or commercially collect data from its flights. These technologies have not proven infallible, however – videos online show Prime Air drones dropping a package into a pool and crashing into a residential apartment building. Additionally, news reports from Texas and Nebraska highlight resident complaints about disruptive noise, with one nearby homeowner likening the constant sound of the drones to a beehive.

Amazon faces a number of hurdles before it can begin launching Prime Air drones in Central Massachusetts. The FAA approved Amazon's permit to operate delivery drones beyond a visual line of sight nationally in 2024, though a recent legal challenge brought by 15 US states may complicate this blanket permit. Locally, Amazon must receive approval from the Westborough Planning Board before it can begin drone delivery operations. A September 15th Planning Board meeting began the process, though the dialogue will continue into the Board's October 6th meeting. On permitting, the letter warns, "a federal permit does not reflect the community's trust and support."

At the company's September 23rd community meeting, residents expressed concerns about a range of impacts Prime Air drones could have on the area, including noise, frequency of flights, flight paths, operating hours, privacy, safety, drone cybersecurity, and environmental impacts. Though Amazon has made efforts to reach out to government officials and their constituents about Prime Air, the letter emphasizes that confusion remains about the intended scope of the company's operations. "It is unfair to expect the community to fairly evaluate a proposal when key details remain undetermined," Moore, Kane, and Donaghue write.

"The approach undertaken by Amazon here will set the tone for future Amazon expansions in Massachusetts and the greater New England region," the letter states. "We urge Amazon to address these concerns raised by our constituents before moving forward."

The full letter can be found online here.

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