



February 15, 2011

The Honorable Susan Combs  
Comptroller of Public Accounts  
P. O. Box 13528  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Comptroller Combs:

We were greatly disappointed to learn that Amazon.com, a Fortune 100 company, will be closing a facility in Irving, Texas due to an "unfavorable regulatory climate."

Your office has intimated that Amazon and its affiliated companies owe the state hundreds of millions of dollars in uncollected sales tax revenue. Amazon disputes this claim, and has requested a copy of records created by your office used to calculate the company's tax bill.

We know there has been great debate over the appropriate way to calculate sales taxes on internet transactions, and we believe that big business corporations should pay their fair share. However, it seems fundamentally unfair to tax Amazon while refusing to let the company see the details of its own tax bill.

Texans have never accepted "taxation without representation," nor should they accept "taxation without explanation" especially for a business whose investments were to have brought in 1,000 additional jobs and millions of dollars in revenue. Now, more Texans will lose their jobs and be plunged into the worst recession in generations.

Not so long ago, secrecy and a lack of transparency opened the door to very poor handling of the state's finances. That lack of transparency landed Texas in the middle of the worst budget mess in memory. Now the proposed budget demands that vulnerable seniors and children pay the price for the fiscal mismanagement of the past decade.

We ask to meet with you this week to discuss how your office arrived at Amazon's tax bill. Furthermore, we would like your input on potential legislation that will ensure this problem does not happen again.

With Texas unemployment hovering around 8.3%, Texas simply cannot afford to lose a single additional job because of a disagreement between state government and business.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joerg-Cl".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Farar".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter P. Salgado".