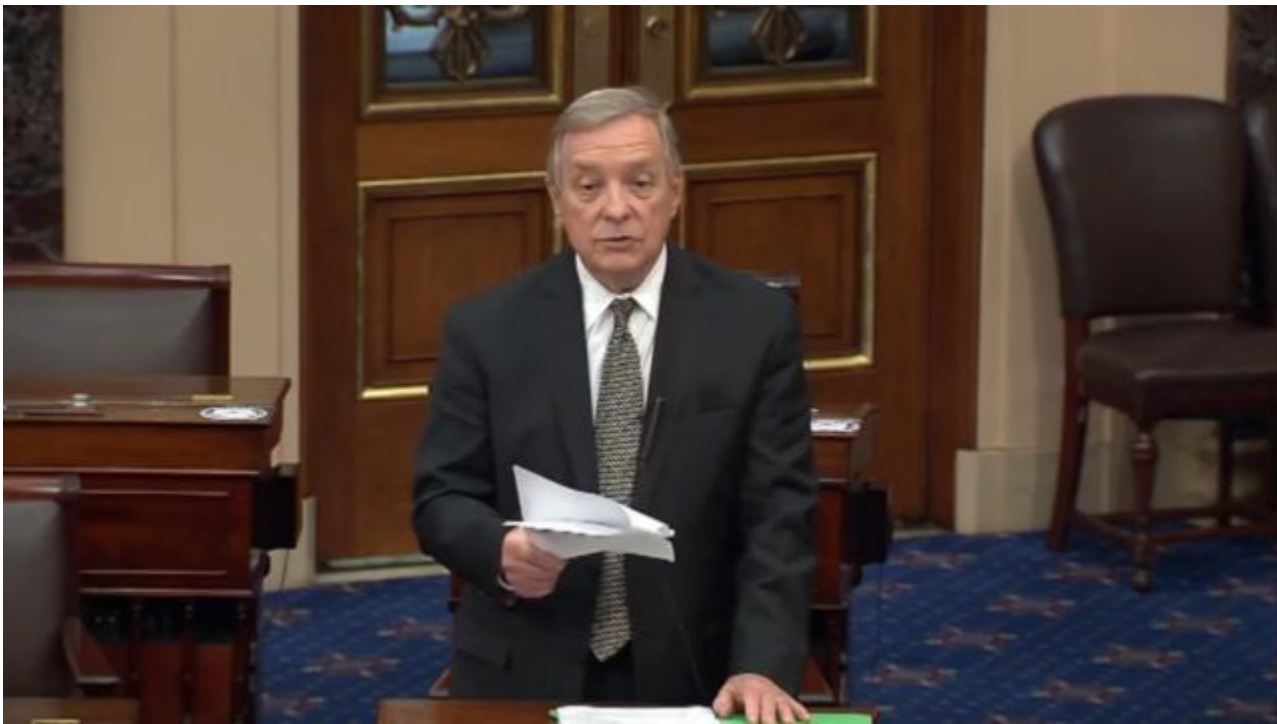


Durbin, Duckworth, Members Of Delegation Call On Amazon To Review Safety Procedures Following Collapse Of Edwardsville Warehouse

December 23 2021 9:28 AM



SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), along with U.S. Representatives Bobby Rush (D-IL-01), Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), Marie Newman (D-IL-03), Jesús “Chuy” García (D-IL-04), Mike Quigley (D-IL-05), Sean Casten (D-IL-06), Danny Davis (D-IL-07), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09), Brad Schneider (D-IL-10), Bill Foster (D-IL-11), Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14), and Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17) today sent a letter to Amazon urging the company to revisit its safety standards, emergency action

plans, and employee training to protect employees during severe weather events. The request comes after an EF-3 tornado struck an Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, resulting in devastating destruction and the death of six people inside the building.

In their letter, the lawmakers spoke in support of a recently-opened Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) investigation into the warehouse collapse and further called on Amazon to prioritize the health and safety of its workforce.

“Unfortunately, severe weather events like the December 10th tornadoes may only increase as climate change makes the world’s weather patterns more volatile and destructive. Determining the causes of this tragedy will be critical to developing improved safety standards as we confront this reality and work to prevent future loss of life. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced it has opened an investigation into the collapse of the warehouse in Edwardsville. We believe this is a welcome and necessary action,” wrote the lawmakers.

“We also urge you to develop and implement a stronger emergency action plan at Amazon warehouses. This may include actions to ensure employees are receiving emergency information as quickly and accurately as possible; clear evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures and training to ensure employees understand those procedures; and an accurate accounting of how many employees, including independent contractors, are present at Amazon facilities at any given time,” the lawmakers continued.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below:

December 22, 2021

Dear Mr. Jassy:

We are writing regarding the EF-3 tornado that caused the collapse of an Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, IL, on December 10, 2021. While we are thankful that 45 employees were rescued from the collapsed building, we were devastated to learn that the tornado resulted in six fatalities and left one person in critical condition. In the wake of this tragedy, we urge Amazon to evaluate further steps that can be taken to keep employees and independent contractors safe.

There have been concerning reports that some workers in Edwardsville and at other Amazon facilities have not participated in emergency drills or were not aware of Amazon’s safety procedures in the event of a tornado. Additionally, reports indicate that not all workers in the facility sheltered in the designated ‘safe space’ on the north side of

the warehouse, despite a tornado warning being issued 11 minutes before the tornado carrying 155 mile per hour winds struck the facility.

We're grateful that fire and rescue crews from at least 20 nearby communities responded quickly after the warehouse in Edwardsville was destroyed. However, their heroic efforts were made more difficult because emergency crews reportedly did not know exactly how many workers were in the facility, which may have been due to Amazon's use of independent contractors.

Unfortunately, severe weather events like the December 10th tornadoes may only increase as climate change makes the world's weather patterns more volatile and destructive. Determining the causes of this tragedy will be critical to developing improved safety standards as we confront this reality and work to prevent future loss of life. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced it has opened an investigation into the collapse of the warehouse in Edwardsville. We believe this is a welcome and necessary action.

We also urge you to develop and implement a stronger emergency action plan at Amazon warehouses. This may include actions to ensure employees are receiving emergency information as quickly and accurately as possible; clear evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures and training to ensure employees understand those procedures; and an accurate accounting of how many employees, including independent contractors, are present at Amazon facilities at any given time.

We continue to mourn for those in Illinois and nearby states whose lives were lost and homes were destroyed as a result of this severe weather. Amazon must prioritize the health and safety of its workforce in Illinois and around the country. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,