

'Middle of the herd' no more: Amazon tackles climate change

By **JOSEPH PISANI AND BANI SAPRA**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Online shopping giant Amazon revealed a carbon footprint Thursday that rivals that of a small country and vowed to reduce the damage to the planet by cutting its use of fossil fuels.

The company, which ships more than a 10 billion items a year on fuel-guzzling planes and trucks, said it has ordered 100,000 electric vans that will start delivering packages to shoppers' doorsteps in 2021. It also plans to have 100% of its energy use come from solar panels and other renewable energy by 2030. That's up from 40% today.

"We've been in the middle of the herd on this issue and we want to move to the

forefront," said Amazon CEO and founder Jeff Bezos, who announced the initiative at an event in Washington.

Amazon said it emitted 44.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide last year, a number that comes close to pollution rates of some small nations.

"Its greenhouse gas emissions are about 85% of the emissions of Switzerland or Denmark," said Gregg Marland, a professor at the Research Institute for Environment, Energy and Economics at Appalachian State University.

Amazon has faced pressure from its own employees who say the company should do more to combat climate change. Earlier this year, more than 8,000 Amazon staffers signed an open letter to Bezos, demanding that Amazon cut



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos speaks during his news conference at the National Press Club in Washington on Thursday. Bezos announced the Climate Pledge, setting a goal to meet the Paris Agreement 10 years early.

its carbon emissions, end its use of fossil fuels and stop working with oil companies who use Amazon's technology to find drillable oil faster. More than 1,500 employees are planning a walkout Friday to support the Global Climate

Strike, a worldwide climate change protest.

Amazon Employees For Climate Justice, a group founded by Amazon workers, said the company's announcement amounted to a "huge win" and proved that

employee pressure works. It said in a statement that it would keep pushing the issue as long as Amazon continues working with oil and gas companies and donating to politicians who deny climate change.

Bezos defended Amazon's work with oil and gas companies, arguing that "we need to help them instead of vilify them," and said Amazon would take a "hard look" at campaign contributions to climate deniers. However, he stopped short of saying such donations would stop.

To measure its carbon footprint, Amazon looked at emissions from all of its businesses, including the planes it operates and the energy it uses to make Echos, Kindles and its other tech devices. Amazon even included customers' trips to Whole Foods, the gro-

cery chain it owns.

"It's very comprehensive," said Beril Toktay, professor of operations and supply chain management at Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business. She said she would like to see Amazon include the carbon footprint of the products it sells on its website, which could help drive people to shop for items that are less damaging to the environment.

Amazon said it will work with suppliers and delivery partners to reduce their carbon footprint, too.

Robin Bell, a research professor at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, said it was exciting to see Amazon taking meaningful steps to reduce its carbon footprint.

"They're blazing a trail for other companies to follow suit," Bell said.

House chairman: Whistleblower complaint may involve Trump

By **MARY CLARE JALONICK AND LISA MASCARO**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's director of national intelligence is refusing to turn over to Congress a whistleblower complaint that reportedly concerns Trump making an unspecified promise to a foreign leader. It's a matter of urgent concern, the intelligence community's inspector general said.

Trump, though giving no details about any incident, denied on Thursday that he would ever "say something inappropriate" on such a call.

The committee chairman, California Democrat Adam Schiff, said he could not confirm whether the report from *The Washington Post* was accurate because the administration was claiming privilege

in withholding the complaint. But letters from the intelligence community's inspector general to the committee released Thursday said it was an "urgent" matter of "serious or flagrant abuse" that must be shared with lawmakers.

"There is an effort to prevent this information from getting to Congress," Schiff said, describing it as an unprecedented departure from law.

Schiff said the acting director of national intelligence, Joseph Maguire, in a further departure from standard procedure, consulted with the Justice Department, in deciding not to transmit the complaint to Congress. It's unclear if the White House was also involved, he said.

Because the director is claiming privileged information, Schiff said he believes the whistleblower's complaint "likely involves the president

or people around him."

Schiff spoke to reporters after the intelligence community's inspector general, Michael Atkinson, appeared behind closed doors Thursday but declined to tell the panel the substance of the complaint.

The chairman said he would go to court, if necessary, to try to force the administration to turn over the information in the complaint.

The Washington Post reported the complaint involves an intelligence official's allegation that Trump made the promise to an unidentified foreign leader in a telephone call. The *Post* cited two anonymous former U.S. officials.

The Associated Press has not confirmed the report.

Trump dismissed it all. "Another Fake News story out there — It never ends!" Trump tweeted. "Virtually

anytime I speak on the phone to a foreign leader, I understand that there may be many people listening from various U.S. agencies, not to mention those from the other country itself. No problem!"

He asked: "Is anybody dumb enough to believe that I would say something inappropriate with a foreign leader while on such a potentially 'heavily populated' call?"

But the situation raised Democrats' concerns that the intelligence community might be under pressure from the administration to withhold information from Congress.

Trump named Maguire, a former Navy official, as acting intelligence director in August, after the departure of Director Dan Coats who often clashed with the president, and the retirement of Sue Gordon, a career professional in the No. 2 position.

Maguire has refused to discuss details but he has been subpoenaed by the panel and is expected to testify publicly about the whistleblower complaint next Thursday. Both Maguire and Atkinson are also expected next week at the Senate Intelligence Committee.

House lawmakers on the intelligence panel appeared frustrated as they left the closed session.

"There's a lot more we have to learn," said Rep. Mike Quigley, D-Ill.

In calling the inspector general to testify, Schiff said Atkinson determined the whistleblower complaint was "credible and urgent" and should be "transmitted to Congress."

Atkinson wrote in letters to the committee chairman released Thursday that he and Maguire had hit an "impasse"

over the acting director's decision not to share the complaint with Congress.

While Atkinson wrote that he believed Maguire's position was in "good faith" it did not appear to be consistent with past practice. Atkinson said he was told by the legal counsel for the director of national intelligence that the complaint did not meet the definition of an "urgent concern." He said the Justice Department said it did not fall under the intelligence director's jurisdiction because it did not involve an intelligence professional.

Atkinson said he disagreed with the Justice Department's view. The complaint "not only falls under DNI's jurisdiction," Atkinson wrote, "but relates to one of the most significant and important of DNI's responsibilities to the American people."

House OKs measure to prevent possible end-of-month shutdown

By **ANDREW TAYLOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House passed a short-term bill Thursday to prevent a federal shutdown when the budget year ends Sept. 30, and give lawmakers until the Thanksgiving break to negotiate and approve \$1.4 trillion for federal agencies.

The Senate is expected to approve the stopgap bill next week. The vote in the Dem-

ocratic-run House on the bipartisan plan was 301-123.

The agency spending bills would fill in the details of this summer's budget and debt agreement between President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

The Republican-controlled Senate is struggling over how to move ahead with its versions of the follow-up spending bills. There is partisan skirmishing over the bound-

aries of the budget agreement and Trump's moves to pay for the U.S.-Mexico border fence without congressional approval.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday approved three non-controversial measures on unanimous votes as the sniping continued in the wake of Wednesday's Democratic filibuster of the almost \$700 billion defense bill and other legislation.

Senate Democrats accused Republicans of shortchanging health and education programs to finance the border project and would permit the president to transfer military dollars for the wall again.

But Democrats also want to maintain some leverage over Trump by holding back the Pentagon measure he cares most in order to help force compromises on the domestic bills important to their party.

"We're at a crossroads right now," said the committee chairman, Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., who is caught in the middle of a battle between Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York. "I don't know what will happen."

In the House, Pelosi and the top Republican simply want the Senate to act. The second-ranking House

Democrat, Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, was one of several lawmakers who said there's no reason that Congress cannot complete the spending bills before Thanksgiving.

"I had discussions yesterday with Schumer. I think we can get this done," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., who called the Senate's battles "more theatre than anything — I think we'll get it done."



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