



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Harrington Investments, Inc. (HII), a Napa Valley-based socially responsible investment (SRI) firm, is calling upon Amazon (AMZN) to halt the expansion, development, and marketing of facial recognition technology.¹ This “call to action” comes in the form of an investor letter, in which a number of other investment firms, organizations and individuals who are also shareholders have signed-on, which was submitted to Jeff Bezos, CEO and founder of Amazon.

This action was prompted by a report released last month by a coalition of civil rights organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), in which they wrote to Amazon challenging the company’s release of Rekognition as: “. . . a powerful surveillance system readily available to violate rights and target communities of color.”

Today the ACLU is holding a press conference in Seattle, Washington at 1:00 pm PST in front of the Amazon Spheres Building, 2101 7th Avenue. Contact: Doug Honig: 206-624-2184.

The Harrington investor sign-on letter calls upon the company to demonstrate appropriate fiduciary oversight and adopt guidelines and policies to safeguard privacy rights of customers, shareholders, and citizens.

“Amazon’s Web Services facial recognition technology called “Rekognition”, may lead to the violation of privacy, as well as civil and human rights,” said John Harrington, President /CEO of HII. “While it may be intended to enhance law enforcement activities, it may also ultimately violate civil and human rights, creating substantial social injury.”

¹ HII, its clients and John Harrington are owners of AMZN.

The investor sign-on letter (attached) provides examples of how the flaws in the AMZN technology also replicates bias based on race and other factors, which unfairly and disproportionately target and surveil people of color and immigrants because, studies have shown, that while facial recognition is accurate for white men, it was more often than not, inaccurate for darker skinned people, especially women.

In the letter to Jeffrey Bezos, Founder and CEO of AMZN, shareholders express concern that Rekognition government surveillance infrastructure technology may not only pose a threat to privacy of customers and other stakeholders, but may also raise substantial company risks, negatively impacting stock value and increasing risk for shareholders, mentioning the recent experience of Facebook, which shared personal data with Facebook third-party developers, compromising customer privacy.

The letter to Bezos claims that there has been no evidence that the company's board of directors, as fiduciaries, has conducted any significant oversight of Rekognition, if it should be deployed, or even how it should be deployed, including the risk of the technology being marketed to foreign authoritarian governments where Rekognition may be used to identify, detain, incarcerate, and possibly torture, democracy and free speech advocates.

"Many of us, going back to the early 70s, fought the evil of apartheid in South Africa, in which the authoritarian government utilized a pass system to control the movement of non-white citizens within the country," explains John Harrington. "The South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) would have welcomed the development of Amazon's Rekognition."

"New technologies always cut both ways depending upon who is in control. While it can be used to identify and surveil immigrants and civil society organizations, it can also be used to identify gun owners, politicians, corporate executives, labor activists, or even Amazon customers and shareholders," Harrington concluded.

HII is a 35-year old socially responsible Registered Investment Advisor (RIA), managing assets for institutions and individuals, managing approximately \$240 million in assets. The firm utilizes environmental, social, and governance (ESG) screening criteria, in addition to financial criteria, engages in shareholder advocacy, and implements an impact investing methodology in managing portfolios for clients.