March 30th, 2020

Dear Mr. Bezos,

On behalf of the small and midsize book publishers throughout the United States and Canada who produce books for your customers, we are writing to request a moratorium on certain fees during these unprecedented and difficult times.

Amazon has publicly stated its decision to prioritize delivery of essential medical and household staples during this crisis. While this is an understandable start, we hope you revisit and expand upon this position as soon as possible in recognition of the essential human need for access to information, as well as the critical mental health support that connection and escape via reading can provide.

Amazon’s customers depend on publishers to deliver quality books that sell, and we publishers--either directly or via our distributors--depend on sales through Amazon, which requires both exceptionally deep discounts and the payment of various fees in order to remain as qualified vendors. Depending on the vendor relationship, these fees typically include freight allowances, co-op, ASAP fees, and Enhanced InStock Protection Program. As these fees have increased over time, publishers’ profit margins have shrunk to minimums in the best of times. We are now facing the worst of times with the recent pandemic of COVID-19, and what was previously difficult is now untenable. The decrease in Amazon book sales in addition to the closure of nearly all retail book channels for the near and foreseeable future is already severely impacting the viability of smaller publishers, authors, and other content creators across the United States and Canada.

In the interest of better serving your customers by helping to preserve a stable publishing industry, we ask that Amazon waive three of the four fees listed above: co-op, ASAP, and Enhanced InStock Protection, retroactively from February 2020 through at least June 2020, though potentially longer given all the unknowns in this situation.

As Amazon has risen to the responsibility of providing essential supplies to people around the world, we ask that you provide this financial relief for publishers in order to continue providing your customers with the books they need, to visibly promote your support of small businesses, and most importantly to help our essential industry survive.

Amazon began life as a bookseller. We ask that you acknowledge this core relationship and help us in our time of need.

Sincerely,

The PubWest Board of Directors, representing 230+ book publishers and associated companies