Jeff Bezos and Amazon's current CEO are fighting FTC attempts to make them testify

This week, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) revealed a recent filing from Amazon (you can read it in full below), showing the internet retail giant's requests for limits on the agency's investigation of its business practices.

According to lawyers representing Amazon, CEO Andy Jassy, former CEO Jeff Bezos, and several other employees, the overly "burdensome" investigation included serving civil investigative demands (CIDs), which *Bloomberg* describes as similar to subpoenas, to 20 Amazon employees at their homes. However, like Elon Musk's ongoing squabble with the SEC, the 49-page document hits its stride while claiming FTC individual CIDs requesting testimony from Bezos and Jassy specifically served only to harass them:

> *Mr. Bezos and Mr. Jassy further petition to quash or limit the Individual CIDs issued to them in this matter. Staff's demand that Mr. Bezos and Mr. Jassy testify at an IH (individual hearing) on an open-ended list of topics on which they have no unique knowledge is grossly unreasonable, unduly burdensome, and calculated to serve no other purpose than to harass Amazon's highest-ranking executives and disrupt its business operations.*

Submitted on August 5th, the document confirms details about inquiries we've generally heard rumors about, as the FTC submitted CIDs for information on Amazon Prime and other programs. They write that this round of inquiries began with a

request for details of the sign-up and cancellation process for Amazon Prime in April 2021 and has proceeded in fits and starts ever since, with a June 2022 CID covering five additional non-Prime subscription plans.

> *The June 2022 CID is unworkable and unfair, reflecting less of a responsible effort to collect the facts about a variety of longstanding and highly popular subscription programs than a one-sided effort to force Amazon to meet impossible-to-satisfy demands. The June 2022 CID 'goes beyond Prime sign-up and cancellation to sweep in at least five additional subscription programs, each with their own unique facts, history, and personnel. June 2022 CID 'goes beyond Prime sign-up and cancellation to sweep in at least five additional subscription programs, each with their own unique facts, history, and personnel. Over five weeks, the CID demands answers to multiple complex interrogatories and IH testimony on extraordinarily broad topics for which no witness could responsibly be prepared to provide complete and accurate testimony. Moreover, many of the requests are argumentative and vague, compounding the impossibility of responding in the required timeframe.*

Now, Amazon says that FTC staff are pursuing three days of testimony, with "one on Amazon Prime cancellation, one on Amazon Prime enrollment, and one on 'other topics,' which encompasses details concerning at least four additional programs operated by various Amazon business units and one operated by a third party." Exactly which programs those are appears to be left unclear, but Amazon's purchase of MGM, as well as its recent One Medical and iRobot acquisitions, likely mean there are more than a few potential antitrust issues for investigators to consider.

It's normal for companies to fight this kind of discovery request — but given the high stakes in the FTC's investigation, this particular fight has high stakes for both

Amazon and federal regulators. In a similar spirit, Amazon submitted a recusal motion for FTC head Lina Khan last year that didn’t go anywhere — but maybe this time, things will be different.

https://www.theverge.com/2022/8/16/23307953/amazon-jeff-bezos-andy-jassy-ftc-antitrust-investigation