Shareholders are pushing Amazon to stop selling its facial recognition tool

After controversy over where Amazon will sell its facial recognition tool, a shareholder proposal is pressuring the company to stop offering the product to government agencies until a civil rights review can be completed.

Organized by corporate activists at the nonprofit Open MIC, the proposal asks Amazon to halt sales until "an evaluation using independent evidence" concludes that civil rights aren't being violated. The shareholder proposal is being filed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, a congregation that is part of the Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment, a group of Roman Catholic investors. Open MIC has previously organized similar proposals around controversial projects like Google's proposed Chinese search engine, codenamed "Project Dragonfly."

The groups say they intend for the proposal to receive a vote at an Amazon meeting in the spring.

Groups are requesting a vote at Amazon's spring meeting
Amazon's facial recognition tool, Rekognition, has been criticized by groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, which, in a test, found the tool inaccurately matched 28 members of Congress to criminal mugshots. This week, a coalition of 90 advocacy groups sent letters to Amazon, Google, and Microsoft, asking the companies not to sell facial recognition tools to government agencies. Amazon, which has sold Rekognition technology to local law enforcement and pitched it to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has also

faced internal pressure from employees.

Amazon declined to comment.

CEO Jeff Bezos has generally defended Amazon’s work with the US government. “If big tech companies are going to turn their back on the US Department of Defense,” he said at a *Wired* conference in October, “this country is going to be in trouble.”

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/17/18185591/amazon-rekognition-facial-recognition-shareholder-proposal