

Senator Amy Klobuchar
Chairwoman of the Senate Judiciary
Subcommittee on Competition Policy,
Antitrust, and Consumer Rights
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

Congressman David N. Cicilline
Chairman of the House Judiciary
Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and
Administrative Law
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

CC:

Mr. Jonathan Kanter
Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
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Chair Lina Khan
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20580

January 25, 2022

Dear Senator Klobuchar and Congressman Cicilline,

As you know, decades of declining antitrust enforcement have encouraged the big four tech companies -- Amazon, Google, Apple, and Facebook -- to expand their monopolies at alarming rates. Their next target: the automobile industry.

As the auto sector transitions to electric and autonomous vehicles, it has given these four mega-companies even more of an opening to expand their reach. Autonomous vehicles are projected to become a \$2 trillion business by [2030](#). Big Tech has already set its sights on dominating that new market.

Google's Android operating system - which commands nearly 60% of the US smartphone market - is already ubiquitous in new vehicles.¹ The formerly titled "Google Self-Driving Car Project" is now known as Waymo and has already tested self-driven trucks in Texas and New Mexico. Similarly, Apple is at work on the "Apple Car" and has consulted with Hyundai and Nissan.

Last year, Amazon acquired Zoox for \$1.2 billion to design autonomous ride-hailing vehicles and unveiled its first all-electric van built by Rivian, which went public last month with Amazon holding a 20% stake. Amazon is expecting 10,000 of its vans on roads as soon as 2022 and

¹ Politico recently reported that Google dominates the market to such a degree that the Connected Vehicles Systems Alliance, an industry standards group, is "working on creating international benchmarks for cars' software integration with Android."

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/12/27/self-driving-car-big-tech-monopoly-525867>

100,000 by 2030. Experts have speculated that through its partnership with Rivian, Amazon aims not only to establish the world's largest delivery fleet but also to use the technology developed in the process to produce self-driving vans directly for consumers as well.² And as Facebook has delved deeper into artificial intelligence and virtual reality, industry analysts expect it will seek to apply those technologies into the auto sector as well.

“Each of these companies, including Facebook, want to be a part of or even control and dominate, every part of citizens’ lives,” Professor Raj Rajkumar, who leads the robotics institute at Carnegie Mellon University, said in a recent Bloomberg article.³ Professor Rajkumar continued: “Even for companies like Apple and Google, this is a massive market. CFOs and CEOs literally drool, since first movers are likely to have a major edge. Each of these companies wants to be the predator, and not become the prey.”

Make no mistake: the expansion of Google, Amazon, Apple, and Facebook into the auto sector spells trouble for workers and consumers.

American auto workers have traditionally been protected by unions to prevent workplace abuses and ensure fair wages and good benefits. But Big Tech has a much different record. Amazon is well known for using hard-nosed tactics to stop union drives at its warehouses. “Amazon sees unionization as a threat to its ability to bring technical innovations to its warehouses that reduce reliance on workers, such as robots,” reported the [Washington Post](#).

Similarly, in 2019, The New York Times [reported](#): “Google has hired an anti-union consulting firm to advise management as it deals with widespread worker unrest, including accusations that it has retaliated against organizers of a global walkout and cracked down on dissent inside the company.” In December 2020, the U.S. National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint against Google and parent company Alphabet for spying on employees and firing them for unionizing -- leaving little reason to believe the tech giant will treat auto industry workers any better. Apple also has a well-documented history of mistreating factory workers. In 2019, Apple admitted to breaking Chinese labor law by employing too many temporary workers at the world's largest iPhone factory. Infamously, at its factory in Zhengshou, workers were robbed of bonus payments.

² <http://politico.com/news/magazine/2021/12/27/self-driving-car-big-tech-monopoly-525867>

³

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-24/big-tech-s-car-obsession-is-all-about-taking-eyes-off-the-road>

The role of unions in the United States has traditionally ensured that auto jobs are good-paying and family-sustaining. As automation expands, these jobs are at risk and Big Tech cannot be trusted to lead that transition.

Beyond workers' welfare - which should be concern enough - the American economy simply cannot sustain deeper corporate concentration and monopolization from Big Tech. Together, these four corporations have too much control over our economy and the lives of every American. They have gained this control through a relentless pursuit of market domination and political power, while undermining competition - at times, illegally. Amazon once willfully took \$200 million in losses to crush a startup rival that refused to be acquired by the company, in violation of federal law. Facebook has acquired Instagram, WhatsApp, and dozens of lesser-known rivals in a transparent effort to prevent competition.

The data privacy and security implications are grave as well. Google already profits off of our browser history. Imagine if they can also monetize our behavior behind-the-wheel as well. They know where we go, what we search for, and now they'll know how often we use our turn signals or go five miles over the limit. There are already widespread concerns of privacy violations and data impropriety against each of these four tech giants, including accusations that Apple's Siri and Amazon's Echo Dot record without consent and that Google tracks Android users' locations when location services are disabled. Last year, Politico [published](#) a story headlined, "'Millions of people's data is at risk' — Amazon insiders sound alarm over security," reporting that whistleblowers have been forced out. And of course, in 2019, Facebook was fined a historic \$5 billion penalty by the Federal Trade Commission over repeated violations of user privacy rights.

We encourage you to keep these concerns in mind as you examine Big Tech's monopolistic activities, plan a path forward on legislation reining in Big Tech, and use your oversight powers and platform moving forward. Specifically, we hope that you raise these with the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice before they approve any future mergers or acquisitions and encourage them to pursue vigorous antitrust enforcement.

Thank you for your leadership on these issues.

Sincerely,

Accountable Tech
American Economic Liberties Project
American Family Voices
Athena
The Awood Center

Blue Future
Demand Progress
Fight for the Future
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
IronPAC
Jobs with Justice
Libraries without Borders
Main Street Alliance
Media Alliance
Ocean Futures Society
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Progress America
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Regeneration International
Revolving Door Project
RootsAction.org
Surveillance Technology Oversight Project
United We Dream