



Letter to the Editor

Freeport Expansion, E-commerce Exemption for Fulfillment Centers: Vote for more jobs, economic growth, a better community

On November 3rd Liberty County's citizens will have the opportunity to pass the Expansion of Level 1 Freeport Tax Exemption for E-Commerce fulfillment centers. As the Chair of the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce, I ask that you consider voting Yes on this referendum to create more jobs, economic growth, and a better community.

In today's environment there is strong competition for quality jobs and investment. Being a great place to live is not enough by itself to recruit new companies here. Our citizens were forward thinking in passing Freeport exemptions decades ago for three defined categories of business inventory. Those exemptions have enabled the creation of thousands of good-paying jobs with benefits. Now we have the opportunity to add a fourth category of Freeport: E-commerce in fulfillment centers.

In the world of Amazon, we all know that online shopping is on the rise. Due to that growth, E-commerce fulfillment centers are being built all over the country. These centers create tremendous employment and investment in the communities where they locate. With our strategic location near the Port of Savannah, we are ripe to benefit from this trend.

However, we are also located within a highly competitive region. We need to give our local economic development authority a tool to attract this type of investment by passing the expansion of the Freeport E-commerce exemption, just as our neighboring counties of Bryan, Screven, McIntosh and Chatham have already done.

This is how the Freeport 4 measure will appear on your ballot:

"For the purpose of attracting and retaining jobs and promoting economic development, shall the Board of Commissioners of Liberty County be authorized to exempt from ad valorem taxation stock in trade of a fulfillment center which, on January 1, is stored and made available to remote purchasers, where such stock in trade will be shipped from the fulfillment center and delivered to the purchaser at a location other than the location of the fulfillment center, as permitted by O.C.G.A. 48-5-48.2"

YES

NO

Please be assured the expansion of the inventory freeport exemption will NOT create any new tax. It will simply exempt the inventory of new companies, as competing counties are already doing, and make Liberty County equally competitive for new companies and the creation of new jobs with benefits.

I strongly encourage you to vote Yes for the Freeport ballot measure related to E-commerce on November 3rd, which can help create more jobs and economic growth in Liberty County. For more information, visit <https://libertycounty.org/e-commerce-exemption-freeport-referendum/>

Sincerely,

Kathy Villafane, Chair of the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce