

Amazon workers reject union bid in upstate New York

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The vote at a warehouse in upstate New York is the second loss for the Amazon Labor Union
[File: Jay Reeves/AP Photo]

New York, October 19 (RHC)-- Amazon workers in upstate New York have overwhelmingly rejected a union bid, handing a second defeat to the labour group that's been trying to drag the company to the negotiating table. This time around, 406, or two-thirds of workers at a warehouse near Albany voted against being represented by the Amazon Labor Union (ALU).

The National Labor Relations Board said Tuesday that 206 workers at the second largest employer in the United States had voted in favour of joining the ALU. The government agency said 918 employees were eligible to vote. The outcome is a setback for the union, which achieved a surprise win in April when

workers on New York City's Staten Island voted to unionise.

The latest vote took place at a warehouse in the town of Schodack near one of the most unionized metro areas in the country, according to Unionstats.com. A win there would have given the ALU more leverage in its efforts to negotiate a contract with Amazon and a chance to demonstrate that its win on Staten Island wasn't a one-off. For now, those hopes seem to be dashed.

This was the fourth union election at an Amazon warehouse this year and the third one led by the ALU, which is made up of current and former Amazon workers.

Following its win in April, the group was stung by a loss shortly thereafter at another, smaller facility on Staten Island. A union election in Alabama, led by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union at a warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, remains too close to call.

Many believed organizing the second Staten Island facility would be more challenging due to its larger share of part-time workers, who might have other sources of income and less of a connection with their co-workers. The union also had less time to persuade workers. And Chris Smalls, the fired Amazon worker who leads the union, and other organisers were also more distracted with media appearances and defending their historic win.

Amazon has been trying to undo the ALU's lone victory, filing more than two dozen objections to the election and seeking to redo the vote. Last month, a federal labour official concluded that the union should be certified as a bargaining representative for the warehouse. Amazon, which hasn't recognized the union, said it intends to appeal the decision, and CEO Andy Jassy has also signaled the company could take the case to federal court.

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