

HARLEY O. STAGGERS
2D DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

HOME ADDRESS:
KEYSER, WEST VIRGINIA

CHAIRMAN:
COMMITTEE ON
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN
COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 8, 1974

Mr. Jay Fincham
P. O. Box 136
Kilsythe, West Virginia

Dear Mr. Fincham:

Thank you very much for your communication of recent date. I deeply appreciate hearing from you.

It is good to have copy of the report, "Why the Truckers Shutdown," and I have read this with much interest. Needless to say, I can well understand your feelings and agree with the report that trucking and the independent trucker are an extremely vital industry in our Nation.

I have noted the comments relative to fuel prices, speed limits and rationing as they pertain to truckers during the energy crisis.

As you know, of course, the House and Senate did take action on the Energy Emergency Act during the last days of the First Session. In all probability, it will be one of the first items to be considered when the Second Session of the 93rd Congress convenes.

You and yours may be assured I will continue my efforts toward the passage of fair and equitable legislation for all.

Again, thanking you and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

HARLEY O. STAGGERS

PLEASE REPLY TO:

DEC 18 1973

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JAY FINCHAM, UVL
P.O. BOX 136 "E. 1. 2nd"
KILSVILLE, W. VA.
25859

REPRESENTATIVE OF TRUCKERS
COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE, ORGANIZED
IN TUCSON DEC, 14, 1973, SEEKING
OFFICIAL RESPONSE FOR PUBLICATION
FROM OFFICIALS IN W. VA. & VA, THANK YOU

DEC 14, 1973

DEC 18 1973

WHY THE TRUCKERS SHUTDOWN?

WHY THE SHUTDOWN IS NECESSARY: The nationwide shutdown of independent truckers was not called for any petty or selfish reasons. We believe we have been FORCED into this action by fuel profiteering and by Washington policies which will only make the situation worse.

WE ARE NOT FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES ALONE: The present situation does not affect only truckers. Trucking, and the independent trucker, form an extremely vital industry. Ask yourself one question-- Can you name one product that is not transported at one point or another by truck?If the present situation is not resolved on a just and fair basis, as we are advocating, everyone will end up by paying more--for the food they eat, the clothes they wear, everything. We know that this will hurt working families the most. That is why we believe we are fighting for all of the people.

WHO ARE WE? There seems to be an image of truckers as "dumbells" (well, we didn't create this mess, the "genius" millionaires did). As independent owner-operators, we have thousands of dollars, our entire lives, invested in our trucks, more than many families have invested in their homes. We deal, every day, with ICC regulations and complex regulations that are different in each state. We are all working men, and women, who deal every day with many technicalities--and handle them. We have not shut down because we are "dumbells" but because we perceive that if the present policies are not changed, it will mean a disaster for the whole country.

WHAT WE ADVOCATE AND WHY: END PROFITEERING--We have not exaggerated the price gouging. Our fuel costs have in many cases doubled. FREIGHT RATES have not increased in compensation--they have actually gone down! At the same time, profits from fuel profiteering have increased enormously. The profits, not just at the pump but where it really counts--at the oil conglomerates--have skyrocketed. IS THERE REALLY A SHORTAGE? As truckers, we do not believe this. We have seen too much fuel being hauled to storage--to wait for the prices to rise even more--to believe this. How can there be a shortage when U.S. oil exports are almost twice as great as 1972? How can there be a shortage when the Pentagon admits it is sending 220,000 barrels per day to S. Vietnam?

FUEL PRICES MUST BE STABILIZED. If they are not, everyone will pay for it as increases are tacked on. PROFITEERING MUST END!

SPEED LIMITS: Lowering the speed limits for truckers to 55mph will NOT reduce fuel consumption--in fact, it will increase it. For instance, if we approach hills in a driving situation going 55 mph (instead of the normal, higher speed) we will have to gear down more and use even more fuel. Our trucks are geared to operate at a higher speed, and will operate more efficiently. Any trucker could have told the Nixon administration these things, but truckers were not included in the deliberations nor the decisions. The speed limits must be at least 62 to 65 mph for efficient operation, and to save fuel.

RATIONING: Rationing fuel for truckers will NOT reduce consumption. It only increases the number of times the driver has to stop. Each stop costs us time, distance and money. Many of us are hauling perishable goods. Beyond that point, in the end, everyone will be forced to pay as all prices rise. We have to note that while imposing rationing, the Nixon administration has given 100% allocation to the railroads. Are they going to build tracks to the stores and doorsteps of the U.S.? At the same time, billions in "welfare" handouts are being given to Penn Central and other bankrupt corporations.

VIOLENCE: There has been no violence of any kind in our shutdown here in Tucson. Our action has been entirely peaceful. There has been talk in the media of some violence elsewhere but no talk of another kind of violence which has been going on--that is the INTIMIDATION of our brother drivers and the THREATS to fire them if they observe our strike shutdown. These threats have a violent nature--they threaten the livelihood of families! Yet they have not been reported in the media.

These are some of the facts. We are independent truckers from all over the country, united in this action. We sincerely believe that what we are doing is for the benefit of all the people. We urge all drivers to shut down, though we are aware of those who feel they cannot because of threats and intimidation by their bosses. Working people have always honored a strike in this country. We, as drivers, have always honored picket lines. We are asking all working people now to respect and support our shutdown, and fight with us for what is just and fair.

TRUCKERS COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE, TUCSON

Jeff T. Tuelman W.V.A.-V.A.
REGISTERED VOTER INDEPENDANT PARTY
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