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RR DIXIE TRUCKERS, MCLEAN ILL. 10/18 JMc #2 10/17 0800

I'm glad to be here in my native Illinois, and I'm especially glad to have even a few moments to speak to independent truckers.

For the independent trucker has been badly hurt by three and a half years of Jimmy Carter in the White House.

Thanks to Jimmy Carter's economic policies , the inflation rate has been over ten percent over the past three years. You are all paying the price for that.

Thanks to Jimmy Carter, this country had a severe fuel shortage that almost brought the trucking industry to a halt. You have many thousands of dollars tied up in your rigs, and those rigs have to be on the road to pay the bills and keep you in business. It's tough thinking about those truck payments and at the same time worrying where you'r going to get the next tank of fuel.

Jimmy Carter is the fellow, you remember, who had the bright idea of raiding the Highway Trust Fund to support the railroads. I'm all for a stronger rail industry - but I cannot see any justice in taking the dollars paid by motorists and truckers into the Highway Trust Fund, and using those dollars not to improve and maintain our highway system, but to subsidize a competing system.

You have to be worried about taxes. In 1981 the federal government will collect an additional \$86 billion in taxes from the suffering American people. That's because of Jimmy Carter's inflation, and Jimmy Carter's crude oil tax, and Jimmy Carter's social security tax increases. And to top it off, Jimmy Carter wants to slap a ten percent withholding tax on companies that do business with

independent contractors - like you.

Jimmy Carter lobbied for a trucking deregulation bill that ended up giving the ICC more power over independent truckers - not less - and which did nothing to solve the empty backhaul problem. If Jimmy Carter is worried about energy conservation, and if he's worried about small businessmen like truckers, he'd get busy and see that you have a fair chance to backhaul instead of rattling around the country empty half the time.

And I don't suppose I need to remind you who thought up the double nickel and put the screws on Smoky Bear to enforce it.

Mike Parkhurst put it straight: He said "Jimmy Carter has written off the independent trucker."

Well, I haven't. Because I admire the independence and the spunk and the devotion to our free enterprise system that you have. I admire you because you won't take all that stuff lying down.

I'm proud that I have your support. When I'm president, I'm not going to forget it - or forget you. America's truckers deserve a square deal from their government - not a deal rigged to favor their competitors. They deserve a government that isn't in business to drive them out of business - and that's the kind of government they're going to get from Ronald Reagan.

Thanks for coming to meet me today. Let's get the freedom express rolling. My two-oh is the White House. I deeply appreciate all you've done to move me on down that road, and that's a big ten-four.

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