

# Violence concerns trucker

By Hillary Chura  
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Troy Brown says he would join ranks with fellow truckers shutting down to protest high diesel prices, but he's afraid of retaliation from his company.

"I'd lose my job if I shut down. My company is very good, but it's like the rest of them," he said. "They did throw in that if we felt threatened, we could shut down. But sooner or later, they'd retaliate with bad loads or shorter trips."

Brown, 35, of Madera, Calif., had driven a load of aluminum foil from Dallas to Phoenix and was at the Circle K Truck Stop off Interstate 10 in west Phoenix waiting to pick up another load Thursday.

He and other truckers talked about a nationwide shutdown call that slowed some transport and brought scattered violence in other states.

He hadn't noticed a traffic slowdown and was concerned about violence.

"I'm not scared, but I'm leery," Brown said. "At every overpass and every tree, I'll keep my eyes open."

Scattered protests were reported across the country by independent truckers, but no widespread shutdown. Two trucks were hit by gunfire in northwestern Ohio, but nobody was hurt.

Many industry officials said they expected only sporadic demonstrations and little effect on the flow of goods.

In Arizona, there were no reports of problems by Monday afternoon, and the Department of Public Safety didn't expect any problems, said Officer Bob Stein. Truck traffic was lighter than usual, but that was attributed to the Veterans Day holiday, said DPS Officer R. Mitchell.

Leaflets calling for a national shutdown by the nation's 4.5 million truckers have been circulating for weeks at truck stops around the country. The shutdown was supposed to begin Thursday and last through Wednesday.

Chief among the truckers' many complaints:

- New federal environmental rules requiring low-sulfur diesel have driven prices up as much as 40 percent in a matter of weeks.

- The pending North American Free Trade Agreement, which they say would open the border to low-cost, unregulated competition from Mexico.

Working truckers at the Circle K said that while they couldn't afford to join the shutdown, they shared the strikers' anger.

Richard and Sandra Shaw of Ogden, Iowa, who had just finished driving eggs from Iowa to Phoenix, estimated truck traffic was down about 20 percent.