

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Jimmy Carter says he has "sent word" to the nation's steel producers, urging them to reverse recent price hikes to avoid giving the oil-exporting countries an excuse to raise petroleum prices,

But Carter says the steelmakers were noncommittal in their responses.

Carter said Monday that senators and House members were conveying his message to the companies that higher steel prices will have a severe impact on inflation around the world.

In an interview with CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite, Carter said that if steel "prices are going up, I think it would be a good excuse for Iran and other nations to say, 'Well, if you increase steel prices in the middle of our oil meetings, then it's legitimate for us to raise our oil prices.' "

Iran and other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the oil cartel, are meeting in December to discuss an increase in oil prices, OPEC has defended previous price hikes by pointing to higher costs of manufacture goods made in oil-importing countries.

In the wake of the decision Monday by U.S. Steel, the nation's largest steel

producer, Bethlehem Steel and Republic Steel to make the price hike virtually industry-wide, U.S. economists were — the higher cost of steel is likely to push up prices for a wide variety of consumer goods in the months ahead,

Carter said during his campaign that he would ask for stand-by authority to impose wage and price controls, although he said he didn't think they would be used. However, some economists have said that even the possibility of

price controls may be causing worried

businessmen to push through price
increases they might otherwise wait on.

Meanwhile, Jerry Jasinowski, head of
the economic prey group in Carter's
transition staff, declined to speculate
whether the steel companies are seeking
to take advantage of the transition
period. between the outgoing Ford
administration and the incoming Carter
administration in pushing through their
price hikes.

The increases, which are generally 6
per cent on flat-rolled steel, the kind
used in autos and appliances, are
effective Wednesday.

The Ford administration's Council on
Wage and Price Stability also is looking

into the increases and is preparing a re-
port for President Ford.

The administration lacks authority to
roll back price increases, and the
investigation is intended simply to force

the companies to justify their action.
The steel producers that have
announced price hikes will be asked to
submit information to the council on
prices, costs, demand and profits, a
council spokesman said.