

Culinary Union launches new attack against Aladdin hotel-casino buyer

The Culinary Workers Union has sent a letter to Nevada gambling regulators raising questions about whether Robert Earl should be licensed to operate the bankrupt Aladdin hotel-casino.

The 11-page letter to the Nevada Gaming Control Board claims that Aladdin buyer Earl has a troubled financial history. Earl is chief executive officer and co-founder of Planet Hollywood, a company that has twice filed for bankruptcy.

A federal bankruptcy judge approved the sale of the Aladdin to a partnership that includes Earl, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Bay Harbour Management, which Douglas Teitelbaum manages.

„In light of Planet Hollywood's history of conflict-ridden insider transactions and questionable corporate governance,“ the letter said, „we have serious concerns regarding the business competence of Robert Earl and Douglas Teitelbaum.“

The letter is part of the Culinary's campaign to bring the union to the property, which has been resisted by the current Aladdin owner. Members from the Culinary Union have already picketed the property demanding the right to organize.

Earl's group intends to assume 510 million USD of Aladdin debt and other liabilities. It will invest 90 million USD over three years in the 2,567-room hotel-casino, and says it will keep all of its employees.

The casino's new owners plan to rename it the Planet Hollywood Hotel & Casino.

Control Board Chairman Dennis Neilander said he hadn't read

the letter, but added information submitted to the board would be given to agents completing the license application.

He said Earl's application was being „actively investigated,“ but declined to predict when the process would be finished.

Earl told The Wall Street Journal that Nevada gambling regulators have already reviewed the issues raised in the letter.

„There were no improprieties of any nature whatsoever,“ he told the newspaper. The investigators „were completely satisfied.“