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Hotel Workers Announce Boycott of the W Hotel

(December 16, 2009, San Francisco) - Hotel workers take to the streets this morning at the W hotel, launching another boycott of a San Francisco hotel. Hundreds of workers are expected to participate in this two-day informational picket, ending Thursday at 10:00 p.m.

Today's action comes as hotel management companies continue to press for a contract that would slash health and retirement benefits and would increase workloads. "We've proposed the cheapest contract in the union's history while the corporations continue to make millions in profits," said John Elrod, bartender at the W Hotel since it opened in 1999. "I think the hotel workers have sacrificed enough."

In July 2009, the W Hotel was bought by Asian conglomerate, Keck Seng for \$90 million or about \$223,000 per room. The W is managed by Starwood Hotels & Resorts [NYSE:HOT], the same company that manages the Palace, St. Francis, and St. Regis hotels. Starwood earned \$180 million in profits during the first nine months of this year, and its stock price has risen 66% since January 1.

The union has indicated a willingness to settle for a contract that would result in as little as a 1.5% increase in payroll costs – or less than \$140,000 for the W. "There has never been a question of whether they can afford what's on the table," said Mike Casey, President of Local 2. "The question is whether these companies will make a business decision that's in the best interests of workers, the City, and the hotels themselves."

Local 2 continues to communicate with customers of the Grand Hyatt, Palace and St. Francis hotels urging them to move their business to a non-disputed San Francisco hotel. Those hotels were subject to three-day strikes and boycotts in recent weeks. Workers at 28 other upscale San Francisco hotels have authorized work stoppages if necessary, in support of their campaign to win a new contract.

Unite Here! Local 2 is the union of hotel and food service workers in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. It represents about 12,000 workers in the hospitality industry. For more information, visit www.unitehere2.org.