

Beginning of Story Content

A spokesperson for the coalition fighting a proposed new casino in Vancouver is outraged over suggestion the new roof for BC Place stadium depends on approval of the casino.

David Podmore, chair of the BC Pavilion Corporation (PavCo), said earlier this week that if the proposed casino and development at BC Place is rejected, the

Crown corporation will not have enough money to pay for the new \$563-million stadium roof and repairs.

But Sandy Garossino, spokesperson for the anti-casino coalition Vancouver Not Vegas, said Podmore is putting pressure on Vancouver City Council to approve the controversial project.

"Mr. Podmore has made an aggressive move to the people of Vancouver and city council," she said.

"It is my hope and the hope of the coalition that city council will put some calcium in their backbone and stand up for the people of this community. The people do not want that."

Garossino said the coalition has collected the signatures of 1,700 people opposed to the casino plan. She said it's astounding PavCo would bank the future of the project on a development that hasn't even been approved.

"And what's even more astounding is that nothing has ever been disclosed to the public until now," Garossino said.

"We are finding out now, we are being told a week before this process goes to public hearings, now we get the threats."

The \$500-million casino project is backed by Paragon, which operates the existing casino nearby at the Plaza of Nations, and PavCo, the Crown-owned operator of BC Place.

Last week, the project garnered the support of 25 sports, business and labour groups, including the B.C. Lions, the Vancouver Whitecaps, the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, the Vancouver Board of Trade and more than a dozen unions from the construction and hospitality trades.

Projections indicate the casino is expected to generate more than \$200 million each year, translating into more revenue for the province and the city.

The project still requires the approval of a re-zoning application by the City of Vancouver.

Public hearings on the project being on March 7.

End of Story Content

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