

The goals of the CRC project are positive and admirable. The costs and timing are unsupportable.

At a time when Oregon continues its recovery from the Great Recession, additional borrowing in the form of bond issuance is not appropriate. After the state regains its financial footing and momentum and after the cuts, reductions in services, and layoffs initiated since 2008 are reversed, then it will be acceptable to taxpayers and voters to explore forward-looking projects like the CRC.

When the time comes to proceed with the Project, all the open-ended financial commitments in the current proposal need to be eliminated. Where matching funds are a part of the budget, the trigger to proceed needs to be when the funds are received, not merely approved in concept. Cost caps need to limit the total dollars spent for the Project. Overruns--and the additional borrowing they engender--are typical of such projects and are unacceptable. If all the parties involved in the construction--including the contractors--agree before it starts that the plan is complete as drawn and will be finished within the initial budget, this cost-containment goal is achievable. In addition, as written the project allows Oregon funds to be used for land acquisition and other costs in Washington; this isn't acceptable, and no informed Oregon taxpayer will stand for it. As it stands, the CRC proposal needs time and work before it can be supported.