



In The News

Yank CRC funding, federal budget watchdog urges

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A federal budget watchdog this week targeted the Columbia River Crossing among a long list of projects and programs it says should be axed from the federal budget.

Taxpayers for Common Sense identified more than \$2 trillion in recommended cuts over the next decade in a report released Monday, touching everything from agriculture and energy to national security and transportation. The group offered the list as an alternative to the \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts set to take effect in the 10 years beginning Jan. 2 as part of a process called sequestration. That's the so-called "fiscal cliff" that arrives if Congress doesn't come up with a deficit reduction plan by next year.

The report listed the CRC as a \$1.25 billion cut, or roughly the federal share of the \$3.5 billion project. The group cited "faulty traffic projections" and "flawed analyses" as reason to deny funding to the CRC, calling on leaders to instead require a more cost-effective alternative. The CRC would replace the Interstate 5 Bridge connecting Vancouver and Portland, extend light rail into Vancouver and rebuild the freeway on both sides of the Columbia River.

This week isn't the first time Taxpayers for Common Sense has zeroed in on the CRC. Last year, the group was part of a coalition of environment and taxpayer advocates behind a "Green Scissors" report that listed the CRC among \$380 billion in budget cuts.

CRC plans call for federal money, tolling revenue and Washington and Oregon to jointly cover the project's \$3.5 billion price tag. The project has spent more than \$160 million in planning to date.

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