



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

THE SENATE

COLUMBIA

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PRESIDENT *PRO TEMPORE*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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McConnell responds to BEA Action

Columbia – President Pro Tempore Glenn McConnell today stated that “while the decision of the BEA was expected, it still is unfortunate as it foretells difficult days ahead for both our General Assembly and our state’s families who struggle with a downturned economy and who are forced to work out significant cuts to family and state budgets. The Speaker and I will begin immediately contacting members and the leadership in both parties to determine when and how to return to deal with this budget situation.”

“I believe that the current situation proves the foresight of our members in passing a sine die resolution allowing us to come back to deal with this situation if a consensus can be reached. Otherwise, we would have been forced to either take across the board cuts by the Budget and Control Board or be called back into a special session and spend three times the amount of money as if we were in session with a wide open agenda. Our current budget crisis also shows that we need to pass the constitutional cap on spending that creates a budget stabilization fund to limit growth and stop the feast or famine budgeting cycle. That measure failed by a single vote last year. I will reintroduce that legislation and try and get the Senate to pass it as quickly as possible when we return in January. We also need to also recognize the enormous cost that energy and fuel shortages and rising prices are having on our economy and our future.”

“Our most immediate goal needs to be ensuring that our work gets done as expeditiously and efficiently as possible. I believe that to make sure that is done we need to do two things. First, we need to avoid taking the easy way out by blindly accepting previously made across the board cuts. That assumes that all programs and all entitlements are equally important and equally efficient. I think we all know that that is not the case. I have been a long time proponent of zero based budgeting and believe now is the time to implement it. Hopefully, we will take a serious look at each program to see if that program is as important as another program and then make our decisions accordingly. This will not be easy but we were elected to make hard decisions and I do not think that we can shirk that responsibility.”

“Secondly, we cannot afford to look for ways to increase revenue. Trust accounts and reserves should not be raided in order to provide one-time cash for recurring expenses. Recurring expenses must be funded with recurring revenue. Annualizations only put off the problem for future legislatures to deal with. Also, this is not the time to ask families and businesses to give more in taxes. It is the time for government to tighten its belt and do with less.”

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