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Lt. Governor Phil Scott Issues Statement on Legislative Briefing

Lt. Governor Phil Scott issued the following statement on Tuesday's Legislative Briefing concerning the state budget and revenues:

This week's State House briefing on state revenue and budget reaffirmed that we are suffering from a crisis of affordability. As demonstrated by state economists, the Administration, and the Joint Fiscal Office, Vermont has a continuing budget problem. In the current fiscal year, which began just five months ago, we're approaching a \$40 million shortfall, and the numbers presented Tuesday show, on the current path, it will be a \$58 million problem in the next fiscal year. Once again, legislators will be coming in January looking for ways to close those gaps – and I'm concerned this will mean they will once again look at raising taxes as the only remedy.

This trend must stop, and we can do that by focusing on the fundamentals of a healthy economy: Spend no more than we're taking in, streamline state government by finding efficiencies, and prioritize spending in pro-growth areas like job training, higher education, and traditional as well as telecommunications infrastructure. I addressed my views in this area in a recent op-ed: http://ltgov.vermont.gov/press_releases/11.24.15_legislature. I hope every lawmaker returns to Montpelier with a clear approach: If a proposal responsibly decreases the costs of living and doing business in Vermont, they should strongly consider it. If it increases costs and leaves us open to financial uncertainty, they should set it aside.

Vermont's future depends on us returning to the fundamentals of fiscal responsibility. I hope this is the message legislators heard, because Vermonters are expecting State Government to live within its means -- just as they do.

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