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The State: SC Senate chief says 'no' to emergency legislative session to deal with flood
<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article38926314.html>

Jamie Self

The leader of the state Senate said Tuesday he has no plans to ask lawmakers to return to Columbia before January to address the historic flooding that struck the state this month.

Instead, legislators will return to work in January faced with a new top priority —helping fix damage caused by the flooding, said state Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman.

Dealing with a court order to improve the state's public schools and figuring out a way to pay for long-needed improvements to the state's crumbling roads also will be top priorities, said the Florence Republican, a chief writer of the state budget.

Last week, two House members called for an emergency session, convening before the regular session begins in January, to borrow money for roads and find a way to help flood victims.

"What would we do (if legislators returned earlier)?" Leatherman told reporters Tuesday, after a state spending panel met to discuss higher education projects.

"If you don't know the magnitude of what you're trying to resolve, then I have no interest in asking the Senate to come back and just sit there, not knowing."

No one has offered him a guess of what it will cost to fix the storm's damages, said Leatherman, who also chairs the Senate's budget-writing Finance Committee.

"Until I get that and know what we're looking at, I'm not about to go down a road and say, 'OK, we're doing this. We're doing that.' We've got to be careful."