

RESOLUTION # 34

MICROENTERPRISES ON PRESERVED FARMS

1 **WHEREAS**, the preservation of farmland in New Jersey is one of the
2 cornerstones of maintaining a thriving agricultural land base large enough to sustain the
3 agricultural sector of the state’s economy into the future; and

4 **WHEREAS**, farmland preservation is most attractive to farmers if they have
5 some opportunities not traditionally or strictly related to farming remain open to them in
6 the future to help supplement their farm income; and

7 **WHEREAS**, legislation (A-2839) has been introduced and passed through the
8 Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and similar legislation (S-
9 2620) has been introduced and passed in the Senate setting forth that “(a)ny person
10 who owns qualifying land may apply for a special permit...to allow a rural
11 microenterprise to occur on the land”; and

12 **WHEREAS**, that legislation gives sole discretion for the review, granting or
13 denying of those applications to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC),
14 and further provides that the SADC shall, within 90 days of receiving such an
15 application, either approve, approve with conditions or deny the application; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the legislation established two categories of microenterprise
17 activities for which application can be made, including: (Class 1), which shall include
18 customary rural activities, which rely on the equipment and aptitude historically
19 possessed by the agricultural community, including, but not limited to, snow plowing,
20 bed and breakfasts, bakeries, woodworking, and craft-based businesses; and (Class
21 2), which shall include agriculture support services, which have a direct and positive
22 impact on agriculture by supplying needed equipment, supplies, and services to the

23 surrounding agricultural community, including, but not limited to, veterinary practices,
24 seed suppliers, and tractor or equipment repair shops; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the creation of these microenterprises also would promote the
26 saving and upkeep of older barns, as they would be the most likely locations for
27 these businesses; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the legislation carries with it conditions and restrictions that, in
29 the view of the Department of Agriculture, will constrain the microenterprises
30 sufficiently to prevent them from becoming a point of contention that diminishes
31 public support for the preservation of farmland through the use of public funds.

32 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 101st
33 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 10-
34 11, 2016, do hereby support the passage by the Legislature and urge the Governor to
35 sign A-2839 and S-2620.

36 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the SADC to interpret the provisions
37 of this legislation as broadly as possible to support the farmer and/or landowner making
38 application under this measure, provided there is no clear evidence of degradation to the
39 agricultural operation also occupying the property as a result of the establishment of the
40 microenterprise.

41 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the agricultural community
42 members who may make application under this measure to be mindful of the far-
43 reaching implications to further support of the use of public funds for the preservation
44 of farmland when deciding upon the types and scope of microenterprises they
45 propose.