

## RESOLUTION # 30

### 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**, Governor Christie in January 2016 signed into law the New Jersey  
8 Rural Microenterprise Act, setting forth that “(a)ny person who owns qualifying land may  
9 apply for a special permit...to allow a rural microenterprise to occur on the land”; and

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

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

23           **WHEREAS**, the creation of these microenterprises also would promote the  
24 saving and upkeep of older barns by allowing the entirety of a “heritage farm  
25 building” – as opposed to up to 2,500 square feet of other buildings – to be finished  
26 to support a rural microenterprise in exchange for an easement protecting the  
27 exterior character of the building; 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 102<sup>nd</sup>  
33 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9,  
34 2017, do hereby support the New Jersey Rural Microenterprise Act.

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

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