

RESOLUTION # 33

LOW-HANGING CABLES

1 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey farmers and their employees often operate large, mobile
2 equipment and trucks, on the farm and on the road; and

3 **WHEREAS**, operators of farm equipment and trucks take very seriously their role in
4 preventing accidents, as any injuries from such accidents can have severe negative impacts
5 to farm operations; and

6 **WHEREAS**, in recent years, multiple incidents have occurred in New Jersey
7 involving farm harvesting equipment coming into contact with low-hanging utility cables along
8 roads; and

9 **WHEREAS**, at least one of these incidents involved harvesting equipment
10 inadvertently pulling down utility poles and lines that provided power to approximately 30
11 homes; and

12 **WHEREAS**, incidents like this can have tragic consequences, and in fact resulted in
13 the deaths of two farmers in the process of harvesting grain in Elmer, New Jersey, several
14 years ago; and

15 **WHEREAS**, this is an issue that affects not only the agricultural community, but all
16 truckers, as tractor trailers can likewise become entangled in low-hanging cables.

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 103rd State
18 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 7-8, 2018 do
19 hereby request that the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) require all utility
20 providers whose cables run alongside or across New Jersey roads to maintain their cables at
21 appropriate heights, depending upon current applicable standards in New Jersey, as directed
22 by NJAC 16:25-5.3(a) which defers to the National Electric Safety Code Rule 232, which
23 calls for minimums of 15.5 feet for communication wires, 16 feet or higher for electric wires
24 and to maintain them, where no standards apply, at an adequate height so as to avoid
25 accidents with trucks or farm equipment.

26 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we request the Department of Agriculture to work
27 with the NJBPU to provide a means of reporting low wires and to follow up on the raising of
28 these low wires in a reasonable period of time.

29 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that efforts involving the Department and NJBPU
30 should also establish that incidents involving low-hanging wires in which farm equipment,
31 trucks or other machinery contact low-hanging wires should be considered the sole fault of
32 the utility that allowed the wires to hang below the required height.

33 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NJBPU establish an inspection program to
34 ensure utility line height compliance by utilities.