

RESOLUTION # 38

IRRIGATION WELL WATER ALLOCATION PERMITS

1 **WHEREAS**, water is the lifeblood of the agricultural industry, and agricultural
2 access to an adequate water supply is a critical concern for New Jersey's farmers; and

3 **WHEREAS**, ensuring an adequate water supply, both now and in the future, is
4 essential to protecting the production capability and economic stability of agriculture; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the state Administration released a long-awaited draft New Jersey
6 Water Supply Plan in May 2017 and held four public meetings and a 60-plus day
7 comment period; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Plan defines overarching water supply policies and identifies
9 policy and/or regulatory actions necessary to ensure an adequate and secure water
10 supply statewide, and also provides a support tool to inform local, regulatory and state
11 planning decisions; and

12 **WHEREAS**, one of the policies identified for improving the state's water supply is
13 to coordinate with the agricultural community to more accurately assess agricultural
14 water use and the industry's anticipated future water demands; and

15 **WHEREAS**, farmers increasingly are making Rutgers Extension agents aware of
16 a problem with timely securing of water allocations for new wells, in which farmers must
17 first receive a permit to install a well from one arm of the Department of Environmental
18 Protection (DEP) and then must install said wells prior to applying to another arm of the
19 DEP for determination of what, if any, their water allocation will be; and

20 **WHEREAS**, this has put farmers in a position of potentially digging more of a well
21 than what their water allocation will ultimately cover, including spending more money up-
22 front to dig more of a well than their allocations will call for; and

23 **WHEREAS**, there may be a substantial delay between the completion of a well
24 and the receipt of an allocation; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the process would help farmers avoid unnecessary expense and
26 delays if both the well permitting and the water allocation permits were handled in a
27 coordinated, streamlined process.

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 105th
29 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5-6,
30 2020, do hereby urge the Department to work in concert with the DEP and Rutgers
31 Extension to devise a more coordinated and streamlined process for permitting the wells
32 and issuing water-allocation permits for those wells that helps farmers avoid
33 unnecessary expenses that can be incurred under the current system and allows
34 farmers to use those wells upon completion rather than having to wait for the issuance of
35 an allocation.