

## RESOLUTION # 2

### FARM VIABILITY

1           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's agricultural industry has a long history of proactive  
2 engagement in the identification of critical issues affecting farming in the state and in the  
3 formulation of policy and other strategies to support the retention and viability of a robust  
4 agricultural sector; and

5           **WHEREAS**, the mobilization of forward-looking agricultural leaders has, since the  
6 1950s, resulted in seminal agricultural support programs in New Jersey, including  
7 cornerstone agricultural statutes such as the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964, and the  
8 concurrent passage of the Agriculture Retention and Development Act and Right to Farm Act  
9 in 1983; and

10           **WHEREAS**, the industry embarked upon an ambitious FARMS Commission strategic  
11 planning initiative in the early 1990s, which culminated with the report *Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:  
12 Ensuring a Fertile Future for New Jersey Agriculture*, outlining a vision for a viable and  
13 prosperous farm sector in New Jersey and charting a course for meeting the challenges and  
14 opportunities facing the state's agriculturalists through policy and regulatory supports,  
15 marketing strategies, production support, agricultural leadership development, and other  
16 measures; and

17           **WHEREAS**, the comprehensive FARMS Commission effort was preceded by similar  
18 industry-led initiatives, including those that resulted in the 1980 report titled *Grassroots: An  
19 Agriculture Retention and Development Program for New Jersey* and its antecedent *Report  
20 of the Blueprint Commission on the Future of New Jersey Agriculture* (1973); and

21           **WHEREAS**, the need periodically arises to systematically evaluate the status and  
22 condition of the state's agricultural industry and set strategic priorities to bolster its viability  
23 within the context of current and future challenges and opportunities; and

24           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's agricultural and food complex accounts for \$138.5 billion  
25 annually in economic activity to the state (the state's third-largest economic sector), employs

26 tens of thousands of people, keeps open space productive and privately managed, and  
27 enjoys highly favorable support among the state’s residents, with a combined 94 percent  
28 saying it is “Very Important” (70 percent) or “Somewhat Important” (24 percent) to the state’s  
29 wellbeing, according to the latest New Jersey Farm Bureau/Fairleigh Dickinson University  
30 poll on the issue; and

31 **WHEREAS**, recent years have seen New Jersey farmers facing increasing costs that  
32 competing farmers in surrounding states have not encountered, primarily from the state  
33 increasing the minimum wage, an increase in fuel taxes, and other expenses, leaving New  
34 Jersey farmers at even more of a competitive disadvantage to farmers in other states.

35 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey farmers are facing ever-increasing regulatory pressures  
36 from all levels of government in addition to ever-present Right to Farm challenges; all of  
37 which threaten farm economic viability.

38 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 106<sup>th</sup> State  
39 Agricultural Convention, assembled through a virtual platform hosted in Trenton, New  
40 Jersey, in accordance with COVID-19 pandemic recommendations, on February 17, 2021,  
41 do hereby call on the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture, in cooperation with leadership  
42 from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm Bureau, agricultural  
43 commodity interests, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers Cooperative  
44 Extension, county boards of agriculture, and other agricultural entities to examine over the  
45 course of the next year, the various factors, positive and negative, that impact New Jersey  
46 agricultural operations and report back to this Convention at its 107<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on its  
47 findings and recommendations regarding the long-term viability of agriculture in New Jersey.

48 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to pass, and the  
49 Governor to sign, all measures requiring legislative approval that stem from the  
50 recommendations in that report, with adequate funding to ensure effective implementation.