

RESOLUTION # 14

HEMP

1 **WHEREAS**, hemp (*cannabis sativa*) was a major industrial crop grown in America
2 since the Colonial period, and was used for textiles, paper and rope, and continues to this
3 day to be used in fiberboard, construction materials, protein for both humans and livestock,
4 lubricating oils and energy-producing biomass; and

5 **WHEREAS**, hemp-based plastics, which biodegrade at a much faster rate than
6 petroleum-based plastics (which take hundreds to thousands of years to biodegrade in a
7 landfill), can be substituted for more traditional plastics in many, although not all, uses for
8 packaging, which would go far in reducing the amount of lesser-biodegradable plastics in
9 landfills and waterways, creating a sizeable market for hemp grown in New Jersey; and

10 **WHEREAS**, there continues to exist significant interest among New Jersey farmers
11 in growing hemp as an alternative crop, as markets for products made from it continue to
12 grow; and

13 **WHEREAS**, as of the enactment of the 2018 Farm Bill on December 20,
14 2018, hemp and its products have been removed from the Schedule I list of the Controlled
15 Substances Act and is no longer a controlled substance, although its closely related
16 botanical “cousin,” marijuana remains on the Schedule 1 list; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture has established a program to allow for the
18 cultivation and the testing of hemp to ensure that its THC content does not exceed 0.3
19 percent, as amounts over that level can cause the plant to be considered marijuana instead
20 of hemp; and

21 **WHEREAS**, there is considerable variability in the THC content of different varieties
22 of hemp plants, and it is dependent upon genetics, environment, seed set, flower maturity
23 and harvest time; and

24 **WHEREAS**, horticultural expertise is required to ensure that hemp production stays
25 within legal bounds and that the seeds being imported into the state to grow it fall within
26 those legal bounds; and

27 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture in 2019 submitted to the USDA its plan for
28 a hemp program including testing for THC content, and the USDA approved that plan, setting
29 the stage for the planting, cultivation and harvesting of hemp in New Jersey; and

30 **WHEREAS**, approaching the end of 2021, New Jersey had a total of 21
31 processors/handlers and 58 growers licensed, with 48 of those growers actively
32 cultivating hemp varieties on 55 outdoor acres and five acres at indoor locations
33 throughout the state.

34 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 107th State
35 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City on February 9-10, 2022, do hereby
36 acknowledge the work of the Department to create the parameters of the state's hemp
37 program and secure USDA approval of that program, including testing of seeds and the
38 inspections of growing facilities by the Department's Division of Plant Industry.

39 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature and Governor to include
40 the necessary annual funding in the state budget to continue the Department's testing,
41 research and promotional work in furthering the industrial hemp industry in New Jersey, and
42 providing the necessary and adequate funding to the Department to further work, alone or in
43 concert with other state and federal agencies, to develop markets for hemp producers,
44 including a hemp-based replacement for petroleum-based plastic packaging.