

RESOLUTION # 12

SENATE AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION COMMITTEE

1 **WHEREAS**, agriculture has long been an industry closely associated with New
2 Jersey's identity, as evidenced by the official nickname of "The Garden State," the choosing
3 of the horse as the state animal and the choosing of a primary pollinator, the honeybee, as
4 the state insect; and

5 **WHEREAS**, agriculture continues to be a significant component of the state's
6 economy, with agriculture and its related food industries in New Jersey estimated to
7 contribute more than \$138.5 billion annually to New Jersey's economy; and

8 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey and its political subdivisions have, over the years, invested
9 in excess of \$1.5 billion to preserve farmland and the benefits agriculture provides to the
10 state and its citizens; and

11 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey residents overwhelmingly approved a ballot question
12 changing the State Constitution to redirect funds to the preservation of farmland and open
13 space, again indicating the high priority New Jersey residents place on preservation; and

14 **WHEREAS**, approximately 20 percent of New Jersey's land is owned, managed,
15 cared for and kept productive by the agriculture sector; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey agricultural sector, while being a substantial portion of
17 New Jersey's economy and while managing approximately 20 percent of New Jersey's land
18 base, providing a safe and nutritious food supply, and at the same time enhancing New
19 Jersey's quality of life through its scenic vistas, protection of the environment, and
20 preservation of a way of life and sense of wellbeing grounded in a cultural heritage treasured
21 by New Jersey's citizens, must exist within a framework of laws and regulations necessary to
22 accommodate the varied and sometimes competing interests which exist in the most densely
23 populated state in the nation; and

24 **WHEREAS**, the business of agriculture has grown increasingly complex in terms of
25 science, technology, environmental interrelationships, economic impacts and sophistication,

26 and social interaction and impact and, as a result, legislation and regulation impacting it has
27 become increasingly complex; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the importance of agriculture to so many facets of New Jersey life is
29 reflected in New Jersey’s adopting planning objectives that call for “planning for agriculture”
30 instead of “planning around agriculture”; and

31 **WHEREAS**, issues that impact agriculture also can have concurrent and equally
32 important impacts to areas of life involving food, natural resources, and the overall well-being
33 of the state’s nine million-plus residents; and

34 **WHEREAS**, the intrusion of suburbia into agricultural areas, and issues created by
35 that expanded interface create a need for balance and regulating in a way that meets the
36 needs of an expanding urban and suburban population while ensuring that agriculture
37 continues to be able to provide New Jersey with the vital benefits it is uniquely able to
38 supply; and

39 **WHEREAS**, in the 2020-2021 legislative session to date, hundreds of bills affecting
40 agriculture and related food businesses were introduced in the Senate; and

41 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has not had a Senate committee devoted solely to
42 agriculture since 1980; and

43 **WHEREAS**, the Assembly has an Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,
44 which routinely considers legislation impacting the agricultural sector, and which is
45 composed largely of legislators with high concentrations of agriculture and related industries
46 in their district or who otherwise have a keen interest in and/or understanding of agricultural
47 issues as they relate to all areas of the state; and

48 **WHEREAS**, because of the increased importance of agriculture and its increased
49 interdependence with so many aspects of the health and wellbeing of New Jersey and its
50 citizens, it is appropriate for there to be a standing committee in the New Jersey Senate to
51 deal with matters impacting this vital segment of New Jersey’s existence.

52 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 107th State
53 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, N.J., on February 9-10, 2022, do hereby
54 call upon the New Jersey Senate to establish an Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Committee
55 as a standing committee.

56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that, upon the establishment of such a committee, we
57 urge serious consideration be given to the knowledge, familiarity and interest of each
58 member regarding agriculture before their selection to serve on this committee.

59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that until a Senate Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition
60 Committee is established, we urge New Jersey Farm Bureau and other agricultural advocacy
61 groups to continue working with the Senate's existing committees to ensure that agriculture-
62 related bills are taken up regularly and in a timely manner, as these are, until the creation of
63 the committee called for in this resolution, the only Senate committees in which these bills
64 are heard.