

RESOLUTION # 25

ESTABLISHING A HEMP PRODUCTS INDUSTRY IN NEW JERSEY

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**, in addition to being able to be turned into bags and containers that could
11 replace those made from traditional plastics, hemp-based polymers can be used to fashion
12 durable building materials that can replace both plastic and wood materials in housing and
13 other construction; and

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

17 **WHEREAS**, the varieties of hemp grown for these products to replace plastic are
18 grown for their stalk strength, as opposed to those grown for their flowers to make CBD
19 products, which are the kinds of hemp currently massed produced throughout the United
20 States to the point where there is not enough demand for all that is grown; and

21 **WHEREAS**, as of the enactment of the 2018 Farm Bill on December 20,
22 2018, hemp and its products have been removed from the Schedule I list of the Controlled
23 Substances Act and is no longer a controlled substance, although its closely related
24 botanical "cousin," marijuana remains on the Schedule 1 list; and

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

28 **WHEREAS**, approaching the end of 2022, New Jersey had a total of 22
29 processors/handlers and 39 growers licensed, with 33 of those growers actively
30 cultivating 71 hemp varieties on 24 outdoor acres and one indoor acre throughout the
31 state;

32 **WHEREAS**, the Governor and Legislature included in the FY2023 State Budget
33 \$655,000 for the Department and its partners in higher education to pursue the
34 necessary research and development to create a hemp industry in New Jersey geared
35 toward creating an industrial hemp industry focusing on replacements for plastic bags
36 and other packaging, as well as replacements for plastic and wood building materials.

37 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 108th State
38 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9, 2023, do
39 hereby acknowledge the work of the Department to create the parameters of the state's
40 hemp program and secure USDA approval of that program, including testing of seeds and
41 the inspections of growing facilities by the Department's Division of Plant Industry, and
42 further urge the Department and Division to work with farmers on planting the varieties of
43 hemp most suited to be turned into polymers that can be used to create alternatives to
44 plastic bags and containers, as well as building materials that can replace plastic and wood
45 components.

46 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we applaud the Legislature and Governor for the
47 inclusion of funding in the FY2023 State Budget for beginning the work to establish this new
48 industry and urge them to include the necessary annual funding in the State budget to
49 continue the testing, research, and promotional work of the Department and its partners in
50 furthering the industrial hemp industry in New Jersey.