**RESOLUTION # 16**

**EQUINE AND HORSERACING INDUSTRY**

**WHEREAS,** New Jersey’s equine sector is diverse, involving breeding, sports competition, recreation, equine assisted therapy for children and adults, publicly and privately owned equestrian facilities, research and development at the Rutgers Equine Science Center, horseracing, and other equine and agriculturally related entities and activities; and

**WHEREAS,** it is notable that New Jersey, whose State Animal is the horse, is home to breeders of internationally recognized performance horses, especially in the growing category of Sport Horse competition, and that research and education are important components to the success and future of the equine industry; and

**WHEREAS**, the biggest recent changes in the sector have been a continued commitment by the State of New Jersey to supplement purses and breeding incentive programs for Jersey Bred and Sire Stakes horses, as embodied in legislation that supplies the racing and breeding programs with $20 million a year for five years (now in its fifth year**)** with the possibility of those payments being extended if the industry meets benchmarks of increased breeding, training, and other equine activities demonstrating a turnaround of the industry in the state; and

**WHEREAS**, legislation was introduced before the end of the 2022-2023 Legislative session, and is expected to be re-introduced in the new 2024-2025 session if not passed during the “lame duck” session, that would extend until 2029 the $20 million annual appropriation to support the industry; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition, because of the state incentives so far, the number of Standardbred stallions standing in New Jersey has remained steady, and the number of mares bred increased from 442 in 2019 to 729 in 2022, and the number of foals registered increased from 272 in 2019 to 488 foals registered in 2022; an increase of 69 percent and 80 percent, respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition, a new pacing stallion, Tattoo Artist, which earned more than $2.55 million in its racing lifetime, will stand at Deo Volente Farms in 2024; and

**WHEREAS,** New Jersey Sire Stakes program purses also increased from $2.9 million in 2019 to $4.1 million in 2023, an increase of 38 percent, and ownersof New Jersey bred horses reaped the benefits, with purse increases for the NJSS and the addition of the New Jersey Maturity series during this time period; and

**WHEREAS,** in the Thoroughbred industry, steady increases in mares and foals born in the state have reversed years of steady decline; and

**WHEREAS**,there werefour registered stallions standing in New Jersey in 2023, and three new stallions will stand in New Jersey in 2024, with one of them, Max Player, being a multiple Grade 1 winner that earned over $1.5 million; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2004, as part of revisions to the sales tax code, horse stall rental has been considered a sales-taxable item, and legislation is needed to clarify that horse stalls and related horse-keeping expenses should not be subject to New Jersey Sales tax; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2009, there has been a sharp decline in the number of horse farms being preserved annually and the acreage of horse farms preserved, from 2009 when horse farms made up 11 percent of the farms preserved and 8 percent of the total acres, to 2014, when 4.9 percent of the farms preserved were horse farms, constituting 3.9 percent of the land preserved; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to racehorses, New Jersey also is home to a significant number of other sporting and pleasure horses, and the continued promotion of that part of the sector, through the Equine Advisory Board and Rutgers Equine Science Center, is crucial to maintaining a well-rounded equine sector; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023, the Rutgers Equine Science Center hosted the first New Jersey Equine Industry Summit in 20 years, for the purpose of taking the pulse on the challenges the horse industry faces and to come up with solutions to ensure its sustainability.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 109th State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 7-8, 2024, direct the Department and the Equine Advisory Board to continue pursuing alternative funding options to support the Board’s mission to promote the New Jersey equine industry and to support youth educational programs and equine research at the Rutgers Equine Science Center.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly support legislation that would extend the $20 million annual State appropriation to the horseracing industry in order to keep purses at a level that encourages and supports the breeding sector remaining in New Jersey.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to exempt from the state sales tax pursuant to the “Sales and Use Tax Act” the activities of stabling a horse, pony, mule, donkey or hinny in a barn, stable or other similar structure or facility by a person engaged in the business of boarding, stabling or otherwise keeping or holding horses, ponies, mules, donkeys or hinnies.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department and other equine-related interests to educate owners about responsible breeding, considering the health and quality of foals, and plans for long-term use and outlets for horses produced.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to support the Equine Science Center along with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers, including budget and legislative funding requests to continue the cutting-edge research and education of the equine industry in New Jersey and to sustain the growth of the industry in the Garden State.