# **RESOLUTION # 35**

**PLASTIC BAG BAN**

**WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey has passed a law regarding plastic bags and has been implementing a ban on single-use plastic bags for retailers since May 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, farmers markets, farm stands, and pick-your-own operations are impacted by the ban and there is still a lack of education about the use of food-safety bags, paper bags, and the potential for biodegradable alternatives; and

**WHEREAS**, there will be increased enforcement of the plastic-bag ban and the potential for fines and penalties for violating the ban in the upcoming season.

**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, do hereby request that the Department of Agriculture and State Board of Agriculture convene an ad hoc working group of impacted farmers, from farm stand, direct marketing, pick-your-own operations and farmers market operators, Rutgers NJAES, and New Jersey Farm Bureau to investigate the expected impacts of the ban moving forward, in particular to seek clarification of the ban, consider the cost and feasibility of practical alternatives, and to make recommendations for measures needed to support these farm operations regarding plastic bags.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Plastics Advisory Council, which was created within the NJDEP as part of the plastic bag-ban legislation, to work promptly and expeditiously to pursue biodegradable alternatives to petro-plastic bags, especially in the area of hemp-based packaging, which biodegrades in about 90 days, versus the hundreds of years needed for petro-plastic items to degrade, and which can provide a market for farmers growing hemp in New Jersey.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the Legislature and Governor to adequately fund the Plastics Advisory Council’s work in these areas, with direction to expedite the research into biodegradable plastic bags, such as those made form hemp, and simultaneously to once again fund, with at least the $600,000 initial investment in the FY2023 budget (not funded in the FY 2024 budget) the effort within the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to create a processed hemp industry that could produce bags and other containers that meet the biodegradable standards unattainable by petro-plastic bags and containers.