**RESOLUTION # 37**

**SUPPORTING *JERSEY FRESH***

**WHEREAS**, the *Jersey Fresh* grading and marketing program has served as a model for state-sponsored agricultural promotion efforts for more than three decades, since its inception in 1984; and

**WHEREAS,** the *Jersey Fresh* logo, and those of its spinoff brands (such as *Jersey* *Grown* and *Jersey Seafood*) is a recognized marketing benefit to both farmers enrolled in the *Jersey Fresh* program and the retailers who use it to draw attention to the fact that they stock New Jersey agricultural products; and

**WHEREAS**, the further implementation of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will result in more inspections on more produce farms in the next year, and a *Jersey Fresh* quality grading inspection can help farmers be better prepared for FSMA inspections; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY2024 State budget included a total appropriation for the *Jersey Fresh* and related marketing and promotional programs of $149,000, which included $49,000 directly for *Jersey Fresh* programs (which matches funding from federal sources for Specialty Crops promotion) and $100,000 for promotion of agricultural products not defined as “Specialty Crops” by the USDA (under which *Jersey Fresh*-promoted products are included by the federal agency); and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the Department, beyond increasing participation in the program, is to create a guidance document that will help answer farmers’ questions about the program and provide case studies of those farmers who have maximized their investment in *Jersey Fresh.*

**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 urge the Legislature and Governor to increase the overall appropriation for Jersey Fresh and related promotional campaigns for New Jersey agricultural products to at least $750,000.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge all those in the agricultural community to support any bills that may be introduced in the current Legislative session to increase the State appropriation for *Jersey Fresh* in the FY2025 budget, and to contact their state Assembly members and Senators to urge them to also co-sponsor such bills.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department of Agriculture to continue to explore ways to generate increased funding for the *Jersey Fresh* programs, and additionally urge the subcommittee formed by the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to continue exploring, and make recommendations to the Board, the further development of the  *Jersey Raised* branding program for all livestock products, such as meat, wool, fiber, and hides produced in New Jersey so that those producers may also enjoy increased success in the marketing of New Jersey products.