



# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 9, 2023

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## **New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program Mourns the Loss Of Robert C. Shinn Jr. - Long-Time Farmland Preservation Advocate**

The New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) mourns the loss of and recognizes Robert (Bob) C. Shinn Jr.'s contribution to the permanent preservation of nearly 250,000 acres of New Jersey's farmland through the State's Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). Bob's knowledge and appreciation of business, government, the environment, farming, and land conservation, combined with a tremendous vision and grit, made him one of the greatest influencers of farmland preservation in New Jersey history.

Bob's early leadership as a Freeholder and then State Assemblyman for Burlington County led to the enrollment of the very first farms to enter the state's FPP in 1985, comprising 608 acres of farmland located in Chesterfield Township, Burlington County. Bob also spearheaded Burlington County's work to preserve farms in the New Jersey Pinelands, well before the State created the Pinelands Development Credits (PDC) Bank to do the same. As a NJ State Assemblyman, Shinn sponsored the Burlington County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Demonstration Act that passed into law on June 5, 1989, and which led to the implementation of TDR programs centered on farmland preservation in both Lumberton and Chesterfield Townships. Chesterfield's program went on to receive national recognition as an outstanding planning and conservation initiative.

During Bob's eight-year tenure as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), he pushed for modernization of environmental decision making, instituting DEP's use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – a computerized mapping tool used to improve understanding of natural resources across the landscape. In a 1994 New York Times article, Bob was quoted as saying, "As I've just completed about 27 years in local government, county government, and state government, I think I'll at times make both groups (environmental and development interests) unhappy in my actions. But overall, I think you'll find that I've added a significant amount of open space and farmland to the state's inventory and that we'll be looking at an environmental master plan and implementation of it. I think that's important for the environmental future of the state, and that's something that we're going to be working hard on."

"Bob was a one-of-a-kind visionary with the unique ability to convert his vision into concrete strategies and see them implemented. He was an inspiration to everyone he worked with and remained remarkably humorous and humble through every endeavor. New Jersey is a much better place because of him, and we thank him for being a champion for farmland preservation throughout his long and extraordinary career," said Susan E. Payne, Executive Director of New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program, and former Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator.

The New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) administers New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program, including Farm Preservation across the state, Right to Farm, Agricultural Mediation, and Agricultural Development grants to preserved farm owners and operators.

To date, more than 2,825 farms covering approximately 248,617 acres have been preserved under the New Jersey State Farmland Preservation Program. To learn more about preservation and the SADC, visit:

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/>

For Robert C. Shinn Jr.'s obituary and funeral service information visit: <https://www.perinchief.com/obituaries/>