



State of New Jersey

Department of State
New Jersey State Planning Commission
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
*Lt. Governor
Secretary of State*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT
CHAIRMAN

WALTER C. LANE
Executive Director/Secretary

Resolution No. 2026-05
Page 1 of 2

Date: July 1, 2026
Patron: Ed McKenna

RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MELANIE WILLOUGHBY, NEW JERSEY BUSINESS ACTION CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WHEREAS, Melanie Willoughby has an exemplary history of service in New Jersey throughout 50 years, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby was part of the very first class of women admitted to Rutgers College where she was also the first female President of the Student Government Association, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby started her career under the administration of Governor Brendan Byrne, as the Director of State and Federal Government Affairs in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, where she directed the Governor's agenda on fiscal control of municipal and county governments, housing development, and land use planning, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Retail Merchants Association, where she was the voice of the retail industry on the state and national stage, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby spent nearly two decades, across two stints, with the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, where she served as its Assistant Vice President of Markets and then later as its Chief Government Affairs Officer, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby was appointed to lead the New Jersey Business Action Center within the New Jersey Department of State, where she oversaw the Office of Business Enhancement, Office of Export Promotion, Office of Business Advocacy, Office of Small Business, Cannabis Training Academy, and Office of Planning Advocacy, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby was integral in supporting and leading the Office of Planning Advocacy staff in the development and later adoption and implementation of the 2025 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby was responsible for coordinating and maintaining partnerships between state agencies, local governments and the New Jersey business community;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby has brought numerous technical assistance opportunities and resources to New Jersey businesses of all sizes, categories, and ethnicities, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby's personal motto of "I'm from government and I'm here to help" best reflects her commitment to aiding New Jersey businesses, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby has repeatedly been recognized as one of New Jersey's most influential economic development and business leaders, and;

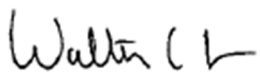
WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby has announced her retirement effective August 1, 2026, and;

WHEREAS, Ms. Willoughby's institutional knowledge of economic development, the business industry, and land use planning in New Jersey will be sorely missed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Planning Commission recognizes Melanie Willoughby upon her retirement, for her contributions to New Jersey's economic prosperity and for her service and dedication to the people of New Jersey; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State Planning Commission wishes Melanie Willoughby a fulfilling and rewarding retirement, filled with joy, relaxation, and new adventures.

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly adopted by the State Planning Commission at its meeting on July 01, 2026



Walter C. Lane
Secretary
Date: July 01, 2026