

RESOLUTION # 22

DRONES AND AGRICULTURE

1 **WHEREAS**, the use of unmanned aerial aircraft (a.k.a. “drones”) has expanded
2 beyond their initial military applications and has seen growing acceptance and
3 practicality of uses in various private-sector industries; and

4 **WHEREAS**, agriculture, too, can benefit from the use of drones for various
5 activities that are central to the growing of crops and the raising of animals, including
6 enabling farmers to view and videotape vast swaths of farmland in substantially less time
7 and from aerial angles that could not be obtained from walking or driving their fields; the
8 reduction of wildlife damage to crops through the use of drones to scare off animals that
9 can cause significant crop damage; and the mapping and documentation of fields that
10 could aid greatly in traceback efforts in the event of a foodborne illness incident; and

11 **WHEREAS**, drones also have come under scrutiny from the public when they are
12 misused by their operators, especially when intruding over the properties of others that
13 have not given their permission, and must be properly regulated to avoid conflicts among
14 property owners; and

15 **WHEREAS**, farmers also have expressed concern about the use of drones by
16 government agencies or activist groups to fly over their fields without the farmers’
17 permission and record data that, in the wrong hands, could expose the farmer to a
18 competitive disadvantage or, in the worst case, agri-terrorism; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the most appropriate way to provide such regulation would be for
20 the New Jersey Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that
21 establishes broad parameters regarding the licensing and operating of drones in
22 agricultural operations and for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to write specific
23 rules within those parameters.

24 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 102nd
25 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9,
26 2017, urge the New Jersey State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign,
27 legislation regarding the licensing and operation of drones in agricultural operations.

28 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we further urge the Legislature to craft this
29 legislation in a way that enables the Department to use its expertise and knowledge of
30 the agricultural industry to create, in consultation with other agencies or private-sector
31 entities with knowledge and expertise in unmanned aerial aircraft, specific rules that
32 foster legitimate drone use in agricultural operations in New Jersey.