

RESOLUTION # 1

HUNGER AND NUTRITION IN NEW JERSEY

1 **WHEREAS**, schools are an appropriate vehicle to promote the availability of
2 healthier foods and nutrition services, as they are uniquely positioned to model and
3 reinforce healthy eating behaviors such as increasing knowledge of and improving
4 access to fruits and vegetables on the school campus and at school-related activities;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS**, schools can serve as an outreach tool to carry positive nutrition
7 messages to parents and the community at large; and

8 **WHEREAS**, schools are required to develop and implement a school
9 nutrition/wellness policy and to promote nutritious alternatives, and the Department
10 continues to train and encourage marketing nutritious foods to children and incorporating
11 more fresh fruits and vegetables into the school meal program; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture has significantly increased
13 participation in the School Breakfast Program by working in conjunction with the New
14 Jersey Department of Education to facilitate the inclusion of “breakfast after the bell”
15 options in schools; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers’ Market
17 Nutrition Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants,
18 and Children are established through the United States Department of Agriculture but
19 have been administered in New Jersey through the New Jersey Department of Health
20 And Senior Services; and

21 **WHEREAS**, a sound, balanced, nutritional diet is important to the wellbeing of
22 society, both in terms of the future productivity of our children and the health and well-
23 being of the population in general; and

24 **WHEREAS**, approximately 1.9 million people in New Jersey rely upon various
25 feeding and nutrition programs administered by or through the Department; and

26 **WHEREAS**, local purchases of food items including fresh fruits and vegetables
27 can benefit the local economy, growers and distributors, thus reducing the number of
28 “food miles” those commodities must travel to reach the end consumers; and

29 **WHEREAS**, timely information from state officials regarding the potential for sale
30 of locally grown and harvested foods through government programs such as SNAP, WIC
31 and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program would help farmers more effectively
32 plan for what types and amounts of produce they should grow in a coming season; and

33 **WHEREAS**, volunteer gleaning organizations that provide surplus produce from
34 farms to community feeding operations are a valuable source of fresh agricultural
35 products that do not demand financial resources for purchasing this food, yet still have
36 costs related to storage and transportation of this produce; and

37 **WHEREAS**, the state and federal governments have identified the issue of “food
38 deserts” – areas where people lack significant access to fresh agricultural products due
39 to poverty, lack of viable transportation or scarcity of food retailers capable of providing
40 an adequate supply of such products – as an issue that deserves serious attention; and

41 **WHEREAS**, in 2014, the “Fresh Mobile Pilot Project,” that passed and was
42 signed into law in 2012 and launched in 2013, continued in Camden, which has been
43 designated by USDA as one of the most severe food deserts in the nation, and the idea
44 of a mobile unit bringing fresh produce and other agricultural products to neighborhoods
45 sorely underserved by stores providing such products was well-received.

46 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 100th
47 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 4-5,
48 2015, do hereby continue to support the efforts of the Department and its partners in
49 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as community feeding

50 organizations to ensure that healthy food choices and fresh fruits and vegetables are
51 available to all children and adults throughout New Jersey.

52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to continue to lead
53 in promoting healthy foods and sound dietary choices to improve the well-being of New
54 Jersey's citizens by promoting programs such as "Eat Right, Move More," "Jersey Fresh
55 Farm to School", and the New Jersey School Nutrition/Wellness Policy.

56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to continue
57 promoting the increased participation in School Breakfast programs, especially as
58 regards inclusion of "breakfast after the bell" options, which have helped New Jersey
59 significantly increase participation over the past several years.

60 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to
61 recognize the critical nature of maintaining state funding levels supporting the federal
62 school nutrition and commodity programs in an amount that will ensure that no
63 accompanying federal funds are lost.

64 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge those at all levels responsible for
65 purchasing or otherwise acquiring food for community feeding programs to ensure that
66 those foods are grown, harvested or produced in New Jersey to the greatest extent
67 practicable.

68 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge New Jersey state officials who
69 administer feeding and nutrition programs to provide the earliest possible notice to the
70 farm community in this state as to the expected demand for produce and other
71 agricultural products through those programs, providing farmers with a better planning
72 tool for the types and amounts of such products to be produced in a coming season.

73 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we stress the critical nature of the Governor
74 and Legislature providing adequate funding for the State Food Purchase Program

75 (SFPP) in the FY2016 budget at a level at least equal to the current funding, and that
76 additional funding should be provided for storage and distribution of emergency food.

77 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to work with New
78 Jersey fruit and vegetable processing companies and the Rutgers Food Innovation
79 Center to produce pre-packaged, value-added, single-serving New Jersey fruit and
80 vegetable products, and “Made With Jersey Fresh” products, for use in school food
81 service menus.

82 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to
83 continue including volunteer gleaning organizations among those who receive financial
84 support in their efforts to feed the hungry.

85 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly support increased participation in
86 the following safety-net federal and state nutrition programs administered by the
87 Department: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; After
88 School Snack Program; Special Milk Program; Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program;
89 Child and Adult Care Food Program; Summer Food Service Program; School
90 Commodity Program; The Emergency Food Assistance Program; The State Food
91 Purchase Program; WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and we urge the
92 Department to work toward having white potatoes established as an eligible commodity
93 in the WIC, SNAP and other food-assistance programs in which they currently are not
94 eligible.

95 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support pending legislation (A-2783) to
96 move the administration of the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers’
97 Market Nutrition Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women,
98 Infants, and Children, as well as the appropriate funding and personnel needed to carry
99 out these missions, from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services to
100 the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

101 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support the Department’s continued
102 participation in the state’s multi-agency “Healthy Foods Initiative,” which has been
103 convened to address the issue of food deserts by developing a more extensive supply of
104 locally grown and produced, fresh agricultural products into those areas where such
105 items are now difficult to obtain, and to expand the ways in which residents of those
106 areas can obtain those items.

107 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage the continuation of the “Fresh
108 Mobile Pilot Project,” designed to bring fresh fruits, vegetables and other agricultural
109 products to the residents of Camden, provided that the non-profit operator of that
110 program, the Camden City Garden Club, is willing and capable of providing that service
111 again in 2015.

112 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge enhanced support for the Rutgers
113 Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to deliver
114 science-based educational programs in nutrition and healthy living.

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