

RESOLUTION # 5

MICROENTERPRISES ON PRESERVED FARMS

1 **WHEREAS**, the preservation of farmland in New Jersey is one of the
2 cornerstones of maintaining a thriving agricultural land base large enough to sustain the
3 agricultural sector of the state’s economy into the future; and

4 **WHEREAS**, farmland preservation is most attractive to farmers if they have
5 some opportunities not traditionally or strictly related to farming remain open to them in
6 the future to help supplement their farm income; and

7 **WHEREAS**, legislation (A-2389) has been introduced and passed through the
8 Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and similar legislation (S-
9 2620) has been introduced in the Senate setting forth that “(a)ny person who owns
10 qualifying land may apply for a special permit...to allow a rural microenterprise to occur
11 on the land.”; and

12 **WHEREAS**, that legislation gives sole discretion for the review, granting or
13 denying of those applications to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC),
14 and further provides that the SADC shall, within 90 days of receiving such an
15 application, either approve, approve with conditions or deny the application; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the legislation establishes three categories of microenterprise
17 activities for which application can be made, including: (Class 1), which shall include
18 customary rural activities, which rely on the equipment and aptitude historically
19 possessed by the agricultural community, including, but not limited to, snow plowing,
20 bed and breakfasts, bakeries, woodworking, and craft-based businesses; (Class 2),
21 which shall include agriculture support services, which have a direct and positive
22 impact on agriculture by supplying needed equipment, supplies, and services to the
23 surrounding agricultural community, including, but not limited to, veterinary practices,

24 seed suppliers, and tractor or equipment repair shops; (Class 3) which shall include
25 unrelated microenterprises, which have no direct relationship with the agricultural use
26 of the property or the surrounding agricultural community, including, but not limited
27 to, dog boarding services, professional office space, and personal training studios;
28 and

29 **WHEREAS**, the creation of these microenterprises also would promote the
30 saving and upkeep of older barns, as they would be the most likely locations for
31 these businesses; and

32 **WHEREAS**, the legislation carries with it conditions and restrictions that, in
33 the view of the Department of Agriculture, will constrain the microenterprises
34 sufficiently to prevent them from becoming a point of contention that diminishes
35 public support for the preservation of farmland through the use of public funds.

36 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 100th
37 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 4-5,
38 2015, do hereby support the passage by the Legislature and the signing by the Governor
39 of A-2839 and S-2620.

40 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the SADC to interpret the provisions
41 of this legislation as broadly as possible to support the farmer and/or landowner making
42 application under this measure, provided there is no clear evidence of degradation to the
43 agricultural operation also occupying the property as a result of the establishment of the
44 microenterprise.

45 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the agricultural community
46 members who may make application under this measure to be mindful of the far-
47 reaching implications to further support of the use of public funds for the preservation
48 of farmland when deciding upon the types and scope of microenterprises they
49 propose.