

## 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 100<sup>th</sup>  
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.