

## RESOLUTION # 34

### RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1           **WHEREAS**, today's modern farming operation is as likely to sell its agricultural  
2 products direct-to-the-public at an on-farm location as it is to sell them to a wholesale  
3 broker or directly to a retailer; and

4           **WHEREAS**, an increasing number of New Jersey farm operators are  
5 incorporating agri-tourism components on their farms; and

6           **WHEREAS**, attracting consumers to the farm property to either purchase  
7 products or partake in agri-tourism events requires these farm operators to employ  
8 advertising over various forms of media; and

9           **WHEREAS**, social media and other forms of advertising over the Internet have  
10 become increasingly popular ways to reach the exact type of consumer the farmer is  
11 looking for; and

12           **WHEREAS**, the ability to maximize Internet-based advertising depends,  
13 especially in rural areas where farms are concentrated, upon connecting to adequate  
14 high-speed Internet and broadband services; and

15           **WHEREAS**, today's agricultural operations rely on high-speed Internet and  
16 broadband services for many vital functions beyond advertising, such as remote sensing  
17 of field and greenhouse conditions, remote control of equipment, shipping and receiving  
18 control and coordination, obtaining current weather information critical to application of  
19 crop inputs, and for innumerable other purposes; and

20           **WHEREAS**, as technology continues to grow in importance to agriculture, the  
21 need for adequate high-speed Internet and broadband services will grow in importance  
22 to successful farming, and

23           **WHEREAS**, rural areas of New Jersey have been underserved by broadband  
24 service from Internet service providers; and

25           **WHEREAS**, the State Board of Agriculture has heard numerous complaints of  
26 diminished Internet, wireless and landline service quality in rural areas of New Jersey,  
27 especially in areas served by Verizon Communications; and

28           **WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey, in particular the Board of Public Utilities  
29 (BPU), has allowed Verizon to abandon its earlier commitment to ensuring that all New  
30 Jersey communities it serves will have adequate infrastructure for a copper network or,  
31 more preferably, be transitioned to a wireless network that will better match the future of  
32 communications and Internet access; and

33           **WHEREAS**, the State Board of Agriculture has unanimously passed a resolution  
34 calling upon the BPU to investigate the status of high-speed Internet and landline  
35 telephone service in New Jersey's rural communities, particularly those served by  
36 Verizon Communications.

37           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 102<sup>nd</sup>  
38 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9,  
39 2017, do hereby urge the BPU to conduct the investigation called for by the State Board  
40 of Agriculture.

41           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the State Board and Department of  
42 Agriculture to continue exploring ways in which adequate and reliable high-speed  
43 internet, landline and broadband service can be brought to New Jersey's rural  
44 communities, so that the state's farmers will be better positioned to maximize the  
45 opportunities for direct-to-the-public marketing of their agricultural products and on-line  
46 promotion of their agri-tourism events.