

**RESOLUTION # 35**

**SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

1           **WHEREAS**, agriculture has long been an industry closely associated with New  
2 Jersey’s identity, as evidenced by the official nickname of “The Garden State,” the choosing  
3 of the horse as the state animal and the choosing of a primary pollinator, the honeybee, as  
4 the state insect; and

5           **WHEREAS**, agriculture continues to be a significant component of the state’s  
6 economy, with agriculture and its related food industries in New Jersey estimated to  
7 contribute more than \$110 billion annually to New Jersey’s economy; and

8           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey and its political subdivisions have, over the years, invested  
9 in excess of \$1.5 billion to preserve farmland and the benefits agriculture provides to the  
10 state and its citizens; and

11           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey residents, in the 2014 election, overwhelmingly approved a  
12 ballot question changing the State Constitution to redirect funds to the preservation of  
13 farmland and open space, again indicating the high priority New Jersey residents place on  
14 preservation; and

15           **WHEREAS**, approximately 20 percent of New Jersey’s land is owned, managed,  
16 cared for and kept productive by the agriculture sector; and

17           **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey agricultural sector, while being a substantial portion of  
18 New Jersey’s economy and while managing approximately 20 percent of New Jersey’s land  
19 base, providing a safe and nutritious food supply and at the same time enhancing New  
20 Jersey’s quality of life through its scenic vistas, protection of the environment and  
21 preservation of a way of life and sense of wellbeing grounded in a cultural heritage treasured  
22 by New Jersey’s citizens, must exist within a framework of laws and regulations necessary to  
23 accommodate the varied and sometimes competing interests which exist in the most densely  
24 populated state in the nation; and

25           **WHEREAS**, the business of agriculture has grown increasingly complex in terms of  
26 science, technology, environmental interrelationships, economic impacts and sophistication,  
27 and social interaction and impact and, as a result, legislation and regulation impacting it has  
28 become increasingly complex; and

29           **WHEREAS**, the importance of agriculture to so many facets of New Jersey life is  
30 reflected in New Jersey’s adopting planning objectives that call for “planning for agriculture”  
31 instead of “planning around agriculture”; and

32           **WHEREAS**, the intrusion of suburbia into agricultural areas, and issues created by  
33 that expanded interface create a need for balance and regulating in a way that meets the  
34 needs of an expanding urban and suburban population while ensuring that agriculture  
35 continues to be able to provide New Jersey with the vital benefits it is uniquely able to  
36 supply; and

37           **WHEREAS**, in the 2016-2017 legislative session, approximately 200 bills affecting  
38 agriculture and related food businesses were introduced in the Senate; and

39           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has not had a Senate committee devoted solely to  
40 agriculture since 1980; and

41           **WHEREAS**, the Assembly has an Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,  
42 which routinely considers legislation impacting the agricultural sector, and which is  
43 composed largely of legislators with high concentrations of agriculture and related industries  
44 in their district or who otherwise have a keen interest in and/or understanding of agricultural  
45 issues as they relate to all areas of the state; and

46           **WHEREAS**, because of the increased importance of agriculture and its increased  
47 interdependence with so many aspects of the health and wellbeing of New Jersey and its  
48 citizens, it is appropriate for there to be a standing committee in the New Jersey Senate to  
49 deal with matters impacting this vital segment of New Jersey’s existence.

50           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 104<sup>th</sup> State  
51 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 6-7, 2019, do

52 hereby call upon the New Jersey Senate to consider the establishment of an Agriculture  
53 Committee as a standing committee.

54 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that, upon the establishment of such a committee, we  
55 urge serious consideration be given to the knowledge, familiarity and interest of each  
56 member regarding agriculture before their selection to serve on this committee.

57 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that until a Senate Agriculture Committee is  
58 established, we urge New Jersey Farm Bureau and other agricultural advocacy groups to  
59 continue working with the Senate's existing committees to ensure that agriculture-related  
60 bills are taken up regularly and in a timely manner.