

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting

March 26, 2026

Secretary Wengryn called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

Mr. Roohr read the notice stating that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.

Roll call indicated the following:

Members Present

Secretary Wengryn, Chairman
Martin Bullock
Scott Ellis
Jess Niederer
Richard Norz
Charles Rosen
Ryan Feeney
Brian Schilling (arrived at 9:25)
Judeth Yeany

Members Absent

Tiffany Bohlin
Gina Fischetti

Charles Roohr, SADC Executive Director
Jay Stypinski, Esq., Deputy Attorney General

Minutes

Approval of SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of February 26, 2026.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve the SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of February 26, 2026. The motion was unanimously approved.

Report of the Chairman

Secretary Wengryn stated he has been visiting County Boards of Agriculture across the state. He also stated the department is working on the development of a

coalition to address the need for urban agriculture in certain areas. He reported the department will be in front of the budget committees in April.

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Roohr announced there were no bidders for the Schmied Farm auction. Staff will review the auction packet for potential adjustments. A new auction will be scheduled in the future. The Patricelli Farm auction will take place in April.

Mr. Roohr stated staff outreach since last month has included the Monmouth Farm Summit, Mercer County Farm Summit, two local working groups in Salem and Somerset, and the NJ Forestry Association. SADC staff are looking to attend the Conservation Planning Fair hosted by Audubon in April.

Staff are meeting with the Future Program subcommittee to discuss the Woodland Preservation program after today's meeting and will start to develop an outreach schedule to meet with stakeholders and local interest groups.

Mr. Roohr announced Ms. Ally Slotkin has officially joined the SADC staff as a Program Specialist to the Administrative and Fiscal team, and Mr. Bryan Marco has been hired as a part-time attorney to assist with rule writing. Mr. Roohr introduced the Committee to Governor's Authority Unit representatives Ms. Blair Gerold and Mr. Azeem Chaudry.

Public Comment

Mr. Yash Patel from Somerset County implored the SADC to consider Hügélkultur as a successful alternative farming method which could produce high crop yields and have positive effects to soil conditions.

Ms. Patricia Springwell from Hunterdon County stressed the importance of food production on preserved lands. Additionally, she encouraged the committee to prioritize the preservation of large parcels and cautioned the committee about soil disturbance on smaller farms.

Old Business

A. Stewardship

1. Resolution: Delegation for SOE Violation Negotiations

Mr. Roohr reminded the committee of the Special Occasion Events violations discussion from the February meeting and how the law permits those put on notice of a violation to request a hearing. He stated the hearing would be held in

compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act. Mr. Roohr stated the SOE law outlines the penalties associated with violations and recommends delegating the authority of assessing violations and penalties to staff. If a penalty is agreed upon by all parties, staff will bring the agreement to the committee for final approval. If a resolution cannot be negotiated by staff the Committee will have the option to hold the hearing or transfer it to the Office of Administrative Law.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolution FY2026R3(1) as presented. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R3(1) is attached to and is a part of these minutes.

New Business

A. FY26 Appropriation

Mr. Distaulo presented the recommended FY 2026 appropriations request. The SADC's funding availability includes \$66.3 million of FY25 CBT collections and \$54.3 million of FY26 CBT collections. The SADC is electing to withhold the FY26 collections and only allocate the FY25 collections at this time. This decision is based on the agency continuing to monitor the impact of the Statewide Formula to determine which programs require additional funds. The total appropriation request is \$78.266M, which includes \$11.876M in reallocations of existing funds.

Of the \$78.266M requested, Mr. Distaulo stated \$56.63M is being allocated to the State Acquisition program, which does incorporate the \$11.87M in fund reallocations. This is a result of increased values in landowner offers based on the Statewide Formula as well as additional fee simple transactions. This will also allow the SADC to strategically target larger properties throughout the state.

The SADC is requesting the maximum 4% of CBT funds, consisting of \$2.655M, for stewardship programs, as well as a new \$10M competitive round for the Municipal PIG program. Each active partner will be eligible for up to \$2 million.

Mr. Distaulo stated the reallocation of \$11.876M to the State Acquisition program is a result of the 2023 audit performed by the Office of Legislative Services. The audit recommended that the agency shift money from grant allocations that had not been utilized over a multi-year period. Grant awards were also reallocated from townships that expressed their PIG program was no longer active.

This year's administrative appropriation of \$5.5M consists of \$2M for closing costs associated with Direct Easement Purchase, \$500K for legal expenses and

enforcement issues, and \$3M for future Township and County partner reimbursements associated with farm closings.

Currently, the agency provides ancillary reimbursement to partners for costs incurred in carrying out appraisals, survey, and title services on a farm application. In January 2026, a bill was signed into law directing the SADC to expand on those eligible costs by authorizing a payment of up to 3% of the total farmland easement transaction cost for administrative expenses carried out by the partner.

If the recommended appropriations request is adopted, 14% of the requested funds will be allocated to Municipal PIG program, 5% for Nonprofits, and 81% for State Acquisition. In developing a recommended allocation for FY26 program funding, all acquisition programs were reviewed and analyzed for programmatic needs. The County PIG program received the majority of last year's appropriation and does not require additional funds.

It was moved by Dr. Schilling and seconded by Mr. Rosen to approve FY26 Appropriations. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of FY26 Appropriations is attached to and is a part of these minutes.

B. Resolution: A59901 Installation of Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure Across Preserved Farmland

Mr. Bruder presented Resolution FY2026R3(2), which proposes SADC's process for review and approval of applications for utility projects involving installations of electric transmission and distribution wires across preserved farmland.

In January 2026, a law was passed that permits private energy generation facilities to locate transmission or distribution wires across preserved farmland if required to connect to, or from, an electric distribution or transmission system and establishes a process to apply to the SADC for approval of the proposed project.

Mr. Bruder provided the specifics of the new law and the application requirements. He also described the different review and approval processes, which are dependent on the project's scope and agencies involved, as well as the reimbursement potential to the committee and its funding partners for such projects.

It was moved by Ms. Niederer and seconded by Mr. Norz to approve Resolution FY2026R3(2) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolution. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R3(2) is attached to and is a part of these minutes.

C. Resolutions: Final Approval – County Planning Incentive Grant

Staff referred the committee to four requests for final approval under the County PIG program. They reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant final approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Bullock to approve Resolutions FY2026R3(3) through and FY2026R3(6) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Joseph M. & Russell J. Marino, SADC ID#08-0244-PG, FY2026R3(3), Block 18, Lots 1.03 & 1.04, South Harrison Township, Gloucester County, 76.86 acres.
2. Ocean County (Blk 77 Huie North), SADC ID#15-0025-PG, FY2026R3(4), Block 77, Lot 38.02, Plumsted Township, Ocean County, 99.33 acres.
3. Ocean County (Blk 81 Huie South), SADC ID#15-0026-PG, FY2026R3(5), Block 82, Lot 1.12, Plumsted Township, Ocean County, 95.71 acres.
4. 23LR LLC, SADC ID#10-0450-PG, FY2026R3(6), Block 25, Lots 16.05 & 16.06, Delaware Township, Hunterdon County, 22.13 acres.

The motion was approved. A copy of resolutions FY2026R3(3) through FY2026R3(6) is attached to and part of these minutes.

D. Resolutions: Final Approval – Municipal Planning Incentive Grant

Ms. Kreiser referred the committee to two requests for final approval under the Municipal PIG program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant final approval.

It was moved by Mr. Rosen and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolutions FY2026R3(7) through FY2026R3(8) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

- 1) Donald & Elizabeth Stimpson, SADC ID#17-0267-PG, FY2026R3(7), Block 13, Lots 27 & 27.01, Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 54.85 acres.
- 2) Jeannie Mary Aversa, SADC ID#17-0274-PG, FY2026R3(8), Block 2201, Lot 1, Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 7.87 acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of resolutions FY2026R3(7) through FY2026R3(8) is attached to and part of these minutes.

E. Resolutions: Final Approval – Nonprofit Grant Program

Ms. Kreiser referred the committee to five requests for final approval under the Nonprofit Grant program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant final approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Dr. Schilling to approve Resolutions FY2026R3(9) through FY2026R3(13) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Daniel & Whitney Carson #1, SADC ID#21-0059-NP, FY2026R3(9), Block 902, Lots 4, 9.06, and 12, Frelinghuysen Township, Warren County, 333.91 net acres.
2. Daniel & Whitney Carson #3, SADC ID#21-0061-NP, FY2026R3(10), Block 902, Lots 2 & 3, Frelinghuysen Township, Warren County, 38.45 net acres.
3. Daniel & Whitney Carson #2, SADC ID#21-0060-NP, FY2026R3(11), Block 902, Lots 7 & 7.03, Frelinghuysen Township, Warren County, 65.23 net acres.
4. Randy S. & Joan Harrison, SADC ID#21-0064-NP, FY2026R3(12), Block 48, Lot 81, Washington Township, Warren County, 27.12 gross acres.
5. Good Springs LLC, SADC ID#21-0062-NP, FY2026R3(13), Block 45, Lots 3.05, 3.06, 3.07, 3.08, 3.09, and 3.10, Franklin Township, Warren County, 41.33 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of resolutions FY2026R3(9) through FY2026R3(13) are attached to and part of these minutes.

F. Resolutions: Final Approval- Direct Easement Purchase Program

Ms. Bacon referred the committee to two requests for final approval under the Direct Easement Purchase program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant final approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Dr. Schilling to approve Resolutions FY2026R3(14) through FY2026R3(15) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Gombosi Holland Farms LLC, SADC ID#10-0317-DE, FY2026R3(14), Block 17, Lot 24, Holland Township, Hunterdon County, 102.26 gross acres.
2. Frances et al Gombosi, SADC ID#10-0312-DE, FY2026R3(15), Block 6, Lot 17, Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County, 113.72 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of resolutions FY2026R3(14) through FY2026R3(15) is attached to and part of these minutes.

G. Resolutions: Preliminary Approval – Direct Easement Purchase Program

Ms. Kreiser referred the committee to three requests for preliminary approval under the Direct Easement Purchase program. She reviewed the specifics of the request with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Dr. Schilling to approve Resolution FY2026R3(16) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolution.

1. Clifford W. & Rose M. Mecouch (Lot 18), SADC ID#17-0420-DE, FY2026R3(16), Block 4701, Lots 18 and 20, Pennsville Township, Salem County, 111.69 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of resolution FY2026R3(16) is attached to and part of these minutes.

It was moved by Dr. Schilling and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolution FY2026R3(17) to FY2026R3(18) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolution.

2. Clifford W. & Rose M. Mecouch (Lot 24), SADC ID#17-0422-DE, FY2026R3(17), Block 4701, Lot 24, Pennsville Township, Salem County, 92.78 gross acres.

3. James A. & Mercina P. Gant, SADC ID#17-0409-DE, FY2026R3(18), Block 4701, Lots 27 & 28, Pennsville Township, Salem County, 43.50 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of resolution FY2026R3(17) to FY2026R3(18) is attached to and part of these minutes.

H. Draft Exception Area Guidance Document

Ms. Kreiser presented a draft Exception Area guidance document which aims to assist future preservation applicants in understanding the general premise of exception areas, location considerations, and reasons why an applicant may take one.

The Committee suggested providing location examples on the guidance document and emphasizing the flexibility exception areas offer for future landowners.

Public Comment

Ms. Patricia Springwell from Hunterdon County commends members of the committee for questioning the topics presented to them and encourages them to continue to scrutinize the details of each application.

CLOSED SESSION

At 11:38 p.m. Mr. Roohr read the following resolution to go into Closed Session:

In accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-13, it is hereby resolved that the SADC shall now go into executive session to discuss: the certification of value for the acquisition of a development easement on property in Franklin Township, Somerset County under the municipal planning incentive grant program; fee simple or development easement acquisition on property in Hopewell Township, Mercer County under the state acquisition program; and any other matters under N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) that arose during the public portion of the meeting. The minutes of such meeting shall remain confidential until the Committee determines that the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Dr. Schilling to go into closed session. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action as a Result of Closed Session

A. Real Estate Matters – Certification of Values

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Bullock to approve the certification of values as discussed in closed session. The motion was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles Roohr, Executive Director
State Agriculture Development Committee