



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 29, 2024

(Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on May 23, 2024.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48 hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor, Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey; mailed to the Newark Star Ledger; the Camden Courier Post; the Philadelphia Inquirer and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President Holly Sytsema called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 8:51 am. Board members in attendance included President Holly Sytsema; Vice President Barney Hollinger, Kurt Alstede, Lisa Specca, Bob Blew, David DeFrance, and John Hart. The meeting was held virtually via Teams.

Also in attendance were Secretary Wengryn; Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Chris LaRegina, Robert Vivian and Jeff Beach, Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Allen Carter, Ashley Kerr, Al Murray, NJ Farm Bureau; Jade Bechelli, Governor's Office; and Nancy Wood, NJ Department of Agriculture.

President Sytsema said that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the heat stress bill. The Legislative Committee has put a lot of time into talking about how we would like to address this. I am now going to turn the floor over to the legislative chair to give an introduction of what they did yesterday and what we're looking at.

David DeFrance reported that the Legislative Committee navigated through this piece of legislation and taken all the members' input. This is a crucial bill in a lot of different ways, so they didn't take this bill lightly. There was a lot of good discussion and dialogue of how to approach it and they continued that dialogue this morning. Kurt Alstede emailed the Board members the draft resolution with the suggested changes by the committee which Bob Blew shared on the screen for the Board to review.

After all Board members confirmed that they received the revised resolution, David DeFrance asked Holly Sytsema to read the resolution paragraph by paragraph. He stressed to the Board members that the Legislative Committee looked at every angle, at every option and looked at all the commodities when revising the resolution.

President Sytsema began regarding the first paragraph and a couple of Board members had minor changes and suggestions. Kurt Alstede suggested that we should consider the resolution in its entirety first, and then work back to make sure that the supporting statements adequately address the conclusion.

President Systema then read the resolution in its entirety and asked that Board members take notes where they would like to see some type of change occur and then they will go back and address those changes/suggestions individually.

After reading the resolution in its entirety, President Sytsema said that this is the general idea of the document that the Legislative Committee is putting forward. The Board will now go back to the beginning of the document and work through changes/additions that need to be made.

The Board had a lengthy review of the document paragraph by paragraph noting and discussing their concerns and suggested changes.

Kurt Alstede acknowledged Jeff Beach's work in getting the document started and thanked him for creating something out of all the Board's dialogue and giving them a foundation to work on and not be offended by the number of markups made.

Jeff Beach responded that wasn't a problem and the Board certainly needs to get the document to where they are comfortable. He will work on cleaning up that first Whereas and making it into two sentences to help with the run on sentence. This will break the Whereas into two instead of one.

David DeFrance thanked Kurt Alstede for trying to pull this thing together early this morning and would urge that the State Board of Agriculture overwhelmingly oppose this legislation. He also urged the Board to take this opportunity in 2024 to move this forward and educate everyone about what we do and how we do it and how well we do it.

President Sytsema agreed that a lot of things that had been addressed in this bill and there's a lot of things that agriculture does well, and we should be very proud of what we do and how we take care of our workers. And that's something that we all want to share. She then asked if anyone had any further comment.

Vice President Hollinger questioned how the amusement industry got a complete exemption in the legislation. There was discussion concerning the amusement industry and how it affects almost every industry in the state.

President Sytsema said that the exemption has a lot of us shaking our heads because, there are so many industries that are going to be impacted by this. That's why it's so hard to get into the sponsor's office because everybody is sharing how detrimental this is to each particular industry in the state. So, it's very difficult to move forward and to understand why the amusement parks were the only ones that have that exemption when this is literally touching every other industry.

President Sytsema then asked for a for a motion from the floor to present the Board's Resolution on the Heat Stress Legislation A3521/S2422, once it is grammatically clean it up by Jeff Beach.

On the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Kurt Alstede, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Board's Resolution on Heat Stress Legislation A3521/S2422.

The Board's Resolution on Heat Stress Legislation A3521/S2422 will be distributed to the State Board of Agriculture members, members of the New Jersey Legislature and other agricultural organizations.

New Jersey Farm Bureau President Allen Carter said that the Board's resolution is a very strong one and reflects that the industry is pulling together as one unit. Now we are in full force going forward. The Farm Bureau appreciate this fully and this is the way he'd love to see us continue to do our business. He thanked the Board for their hard work on this legislation.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of Barney Hollinger, seconded by David DeFrance, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the special meeting at 9:29 am.