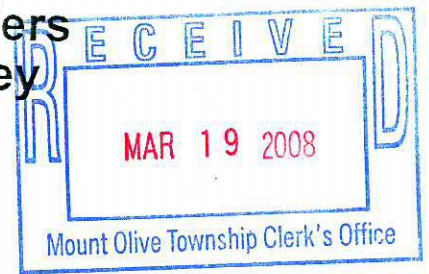


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cc: Admin
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**Board of Chosen Freeholders
Morris County, New Jersey**



Resolution No. 48**

Adopted March 12, 2008

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2008, Governor Jon S. Corzine proposed the FY 2009 New Jersey State Budget; and

WHEREAS, as part of the Budget, Governor Corzine has proposed to eliminate the New Jersey Department of Agriculture as a cost-cutting measure; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture provides many important services to the almost \$ 3.5 billion agricultural industry and the citizens of the state including:

1. Inspection of vegetable, fruit, meat, and other agricultural products for human consumption
2. Emergency food distribution to 500,000 residents (food banks, soup kitchens)
3. School nutrition programs (Healthy Choices/Healthy Kids)
4. School lunch programs for 145,000 children statewide
5. Soil/Water conservation, and environmental programs (Green Energy Initiatives for farmers, Garden State Ethanol)
6. Farmland preservation (160,000 acres statewide)
7. Aquaculture (seafood harvesting and distribution)
8. Equine industry, including racing
9. Livestock and poultry disease monitoring (mad cow, avian influenza)
10. Plant pest control (e.g. gypsy moths, asian longhorn beetle)
11. Commodity promotion (the Jersey Fresh Program)
12. Urban planning and forest protection (Smart Growth Planner's Toolkit, programs to halt urban forest devastation by the asian longhorn beetle)
13. Cooperation with academic and research institutions
14. Seed and fertilizer testing
15. Pet food and livestock feed testing

WHEREAS, New Jersey's diverse agriculture industry (produce, horticulture, livestock, seafood, equine) relies on the services of the Department of Agriculture to remain viable, contributing almost \$3.5 Billion to our state economy while also providing jobs, generating sales tax receipts, and maintaining our state's history and identity as the "Garden State"; and

WHEREAS, NJ Agriculture provides uniquely fresh, healthy food to local communities at a reduced cost to the consumer while utilizing shorter distribution routes than national providers, thus minimizing the environmental damage caused by long distance transportation; and

WHEREAS, the federal Farm Bill of 2007 was named "The Farm *Nutrition and Community Investment Act*" in recognition of the critical role agriculture plays in providing a better quality of life, as well as feeding our population; and

WHEREAS, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) within the Department of Agriculture administers the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has invested close to \$1.1 billion since 1982 to permanently preserve over 160,000 acres of farmland; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey voters have shown overwhelming support for the Farmland Preservation Program; and

WHEREAS, the Morris County Farmland Preservation Program includes 104 farms and over 6,697 acres permanently preserved.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders as follows:

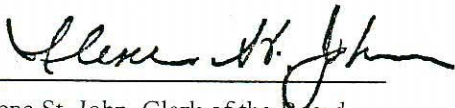
1) The Board opposes this nebulous proposal by the Governor to eliminate the Department of Agriculture without the Governor specifically outlining how he plans to address the above enumerated current and significant functions of this Department

2) The Board reserves the right to oppose or support the Governor's plan on elimination of this Department based on a careful review of plans for addressing existing functions of this important Department.

3) The Board strongly urges the Governor to reconsider his proposal or to present a clear plan for addressing these critical functions of this Department.

4) That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Honorable Governor of the State of New Jersey Jon S. Corzine, to all our local State legislators, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the SADC, every New Jersey County Agriculture Development Board, the New Jersey League of Municipalities, the New Jersey Association of Counties, and to the Boards of Chosen Freeholders of all the other Counties in the State of New Jersey urging them to adopt similar resolutions.

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Morris at a regular meeting held on March 12, 2008.



Ilene St. John, Clerk of the Board