

ASSEMBLY COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 138

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 24, 2024

The Assembly Commerce, Economic Development and Agriculture Committee reports favorably Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 138.

This concurrent resolution honors the 40th anniversary of the Jersey Fresh program, which was the first state-sponsored agricultural commodity marketing and quality grading program to promote the State's agricultural industry. The Jersey Fresh program helps support family owned farms across New Jersey through its marketing campaigns that inform shoppers of what produce is in season and encourages consumers to shop local. The Jersey Fresh program's distinct label placed on locally harvested produce assists consumers to easily differentiate fruits and vegetables grown in New Jersey from other produce in the marketplace.

The Jersey Fresh program encourages consumers to purchase locally grown produce through its quality and freshness guarantees. Specifically, the Jersey Fresh quality grading program requires Jersey Fresh produce to meet U.S. No. 1 Fresh for Processing grade or better. With this added quality assurance, the Jersey Fresh label guarantees that its produce was freshly harvested in New Jersey, has been inspected, and meets high quality standards.

The Jersey Fresh program has demonstrated success in increasing New Jersey consumers' awareness of, and willingness to purchase, locally harvested produce. Consumer recognition of Jersey Fresh products has extended beyond the State to the mid-Atlantic and New England markets and, in 2020, was on par with that of other major national brands. Today, the Jersey Fresh program is recognized as a national model for other state-sponsored agricultural branding programs.

The Jersey Fresh program's innovative marketing strategies have contributed to the program's longevity and popularity. New Jersey produces over 100 types of fruits and vegetables and is nationally ranked in the top 10 producers of blueberries, peaches, bell peppers, squash, tomatoes, and cranberries. The Jersey Fresh program has expanded across the State and is available to New Jersey residents in every county, including at over 2,000 On-Farm Markets run by local New Jersey farmers, community farmers markets, major retail stores,

wineries, breweries, and distilleries. The Jersey Fresh program's popularity and demonstrated success has also inspired related programs modeled after the Jersey Fresh program, including the Made with Jersey Fresh program, which identifies processed food made with fresh, locally sourced ingredients; the Jersey Grown program, which advertises New Jersey grown plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers; the Jersey Raised program, which markets livestock raised in New Jersey; and the Jersey Seafood program, which promotes aquacultured and wild-caught fish and seafood products harvested off of New Jersey's coast.