



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Congratulates Wagon Wheel Farm and Touw Family, Eager To Witness the Farm's New Chapter

JEN METZGER January 9, 2020

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**Orange County, NY...**Through the actions and voices of local community members and State Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42), two Orange County farms are no longer at risk of being lost to development.

The Touw family had for years farmed land in Goshen and Hamptonburgh owned by Goshen resident and landowner Joan Kozareski, whose land had been in her own family for

generations. Mrs. Kozareski passed away in 2018, throwing the fate of the two farms into question. When a "for sale" sign was placed on the property by the Executor of the estate, the Touws contacted their local and state representatives for help. The estate had been left to five charities, which would each receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the land.

The Touws wanted to purchase the land but Orange County is seeing tremendous development pressure, and the land had all of the desirable traits for a housing development. Senator Metzger, who represents Goshen and Chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, penned a letter to the five charities, co-signed by her colleague, Senator Skoufis, urging the charities to keep the land in the hands of farmers, consistent with the wishes of the community and county and state objectives. Preserving farmland is a top priority of Orange County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and the state has an \$18 million farmland protection program that Metzger has strongly supported as the Chair of the State Senate Agriculture Committee.

After months of significant uncertainty, the Touws now have an accepted offer and purchase agreement signed for Wagon Wheel Farm, and hope to close on the property come Spring. Overlook Farm, they're told, will be sold to another interested party, but will also remain farmland.

"I want to personally thank the five charities, the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Church of St. John the Evangelist in Goshen, and the Hamptonburgh Cemetery Association, for ensuring that this irreplaceable farmland continues to be actively farmed," **said Senator Jen Metzger.** "I am thrilled for the Touw family, the many community members who frequent their beloved farmstand, and for agriculture in our region and in the state. This is a real victory for farmland preservation."

“The voices of our local residents and elected officials speak volumes to the importance of farms and the environment in Orange County. We are humbled and inspired by the amount of support that have received during this journey,” **said Jason and Kristin Touw.** “There are more aspiring young farmers that want desperately to succeed and protect the environment in the Hudson Valley, but development pressure is threatening their future. Community effort is needed to back our elected officials seeking to protect and preserve farmland and the environment. We are grateful to have the chance to stay in Goshen, and look forward to being able to preserve the rural character of our County Seat.”