



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senate Agriculture Chair Jen Metzger Applauds Nearly \$300K in USDA Rural Development Funding to Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association

JEN METZGER August 21, 2020

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**Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...**The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced nearly \$300,000 in funding to the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association (SCVA) as part of \$1.2 million in awards for rural development projects in New York. In March, Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42), who represents Sullivan County, sent a [letter of support](#) to USDA recommending SCVA for this grant funding. The award will enable the organization to

undertake a feasibility study and execute a strategic plan to grow Sullivan County's tourism industry, conduct training sessions for small businesses, and create a small business incubator.

“Sullivan county has a rich history as a destination for visitors and vacationers, attracted to the county's natural beauty, diverse recreational opportunities, and arts and cultural scene,” **said Senator Metzger.** “The county began to see a renaissance before the pandemic hit, and this funding will enable SCVA to undertake the necessary planning and business development to grow and sustain this industry for the long-term. At a time when budgets at county and state levels are very strained, this federal funding is a much-welcomed investment in Sullivan County, and I congratulate Roberta Byron-Lockwood and her team on securing this award.”

As Senator Metzger’s letter of support underscored, Sullivan County has faced significant economic challenges over the years, and prior to the pandemic, was “finally experiencing an economic renaissance, drawing in new hotels, B&Bs, and resorts, craft breweries, farm-to-table restaurants, art galleries, and music venues. At this juncture, the county and its businesses would greatly benefit from taking stock of its tourism industry, and developing a strategic plan to capitalize on and sustain this new momentum.”

“The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association is energized and ready to help our small businesses recover from the past several months of economic slowdown due to COVID-19. We appreciate the USDA, Rural Development program for recognizing how crucial this funding will be to get us back on track and regain our status as one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in New York. We also value Senator Metzger’s continued support of the SCVA and its tourism initiatives. She has been a valued partner and we look forward to working with her to rebuild our communities and businesses,” **stated Roberta Byron-Lockwood, President/CEO of Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association.** “This funding will be

essential to help our businesses remove barriers to success. We will offer progressive educational workshops, business incubator space as well as strategies to help them and the Sullivan Catskills succeed for the future.”

Senator Metzger in May co-chaired the first-ever [joint hearing](#) of the State Legislature on the federal response to the economic impact of COVID-19 on small businesses across the state. In April, she joined five New York State lawmakers in [urging federal representatives to prioritize rural communities in the next federal economic stimulus bill](#). Senator Metzger signed on to the joint letter to U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer with like-minded colleagues to advocate for the nation’s next federal COVID-19 economic relief package to include robust funding for states and localities with a focus on rural communities.

*Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women’s Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.*

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