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CUA TO DENR- ENSURE NATIVE TREES PLANTED IN REFORESTATION PROGRAM

Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines president and Quirino governor Dax Cua expressed his support for the environment department's plan to increase the country's forest cover by an additional three million hectares by 2028 to minimize the effect of climate change.

"We wholeheartedly support this program, and in fact I would like to call on my fellow local leaders to complement this with our own greening efforts in our jurisdictions. We need more green to combat the brown mud and flood that have increased in occurrence due to our depleting forests," Cua said.

Cua has been urging the government to create a "green wall" that would defend the country against the harsh impact of climate change.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources bared its plan last week during the recent deliberation of the House committee on appropriations on the agency's proposed 2025 budget of P26.027 billion.

Cua, however, urged the DENR to ensure that only native or indigenous trees are planted for the reforestation program.

"Ecology experts warn about the risk of planting exotic trees in our forests, which could lead to 'silent forests'. Kaya silent forests dahil nawawala ang ecological balance, namamatay ang ibang halaman at hayop," the governor said.

According to the One More Tree Foundation, exotic trees disrupt local ecosystems and pose threats to native flora and fauna.

"Instead of fast-growing and aggressive Gmelina, mahogany, and other exotic species that lead to the disappearance of native flora and fauna, we should ensure that native species such as

