

Fujian aims to prioritize protecting environment

By Sun Li and Hu Meidong (China Daily)

Updated: 2014-03-03

Fujian province will make greater efforts to protect its natural environment as it presses ahead with economic development, said the province's legislators.

Su Shulin, governor of Fujian province and a deputy to the National People's Congress, said local authorities are determined "shed blood" and "abandon the meat" while developing the economy.

"Shedding blood refers to investing sufficient money in projects such as cutting carbon emissions, planting more trees and tackling water and soil erosion," Su said.

"The meat metaphor means local governments at all levels of the province will give up any project that may jeopardize the environment, no matter how lucrative it could be in the short term."

Fujian has focused on green development since 2000, when President Xi Jinping, who worked in the province at the time, proposed an "ecological province" strategy. As a result, Fujian became one of the first provinces to carry out ecological construction. The province's forest coverage rate hit 65.95 percent in 2013, the highest in the country. The forest area has increased by 365,000 hectares compared with five years ago, according to the Fujian provincial government.

"The good quality of air and water is the province's advantage, which only gives the government a bigger responsibility to safeguard the environment," Su said.

While Fujian has clear skies and a clean sea, the province still faces severe environmental issues, including the loss of wetlands, said Zhang Yuzhen, an NPC deputy and deputy-director of the Fujian provincial academy of environmental sciences.

The coastal province has been losing its wetlands at a significant rate in recent years. According to the provincial department of forestry, more than 90,000 hectares of wetlands disappeared from 2000 to 2010. Wetlands currently account for 870,000 hectares across the province.

"Right now the province has no pertinent law that regulates the issue. The legislation should be stepped up to solve the crisis," Zhang said.

Because wetland conservation involves several different administrative departments, the regulations will clearly define the areas applicable to each department and coordinate their actions, she said.

As Fujian was badly affected by smog for the first time in December, Chen Xiaowen, an entrepreneur from Xiamen, suggested establishing a system to monitor air pollution and provide early warnings.

Chen, who often jogs around Xiamen's ring road, said she sometimes noticed a strange, yellow hue in the sky above neighboring Zhangzhou.

"I know there's a large power station down there, but I don't know whether it is the cause of the pollution. Xiamen's environmental protection bureau is unable to monitor the pollution, only the Zhangzhou bureau can do that," Chen said.

"The fight against smog can never just be the work of one city, though, and combined supervision by several cities should come into force."

Contact the writer at sunli@chinadaily.com.cn and humeidong@chinadaily.com.cn



Su Shulin, governor of Fujian province

to