



LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THE PUBLIC AGAINST LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS IN WEST JAVA

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Abstract

Administrative decisions issued by local governments directly affect citizens' legal positions in licensing, personnel affairs, public services, social assistance, land administration, and other governmental matters. This article analyzes the construction of legal protection against detrimental local-government administrative decisions and examines its application in West Java through Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG. The study employs normative legal research using statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. Primary legal materials consist of legislation on administrative courts, government administration, local government, public services, Supreme Court Regulation Number 6 of 2018, and the relevant court decision; secondary materials comprise recent administrative-law scholarship. The study finds that effective protection must operate in layers. Preventive protection requires lawful authority, proper procedure, adequate reasons, accurate factual verification, transparency, and compliance with the General Principles of Good Governance. Repressive protection is provided through administrative objections and appeals, judicial review before the State Administrative Court, and effective compliance with final judgments. The Bandung case demonstrates that judicial protection may correct a defect of authority even when the substantive basis of a personnel decision remains legally supportable. Therefore, legal protection should not be understood merely as a mechanism to reverse governmental outcomes, but as an institutional guarantee that every adverse decision is produced by a competent authority through a lawful and accountable process. For local governments in West Java, stronger *ex ante* legal review, accessible administrative remedies, standardized notice of remedies, and systematic monitoring of judgment compliance are recommended.

Keywords: legal protection; administrative decision; local government; State Administrative Court; West Java

INTRODUCTION

The administration of local government places administrative officials in a position that is very close to citizens' everyday lives. Decisions concerning business licenses, spatial-use permits, the appointment or dismissal of public officials, social assistance, asset management, land affairs, civil registration services, and various other forms of individual administrative determination may alter a person's rights, obligations, status, or legal interests. This proximity makes local government administrative decisions an important instrument for implementing public policy, while at the same time creating a risk of harm when authority is exercised without a proper legal basis, procedures are disregarded, facts are not carefully examined, or the interests of affected persons are not considered proportionately.

In a state governed by the rule of law, administrative authority cannot be understood as a sphere of discretion detached from legal control. Every decision must be based on lawful authority, follow the prescribed procedure, rest on accountable factual and legal grounds, and comply with the General Principles of Good Governance (Asas-Asas Umum Pemerintahan yang Baik, AUPB). Law Number 30 of 2014 on Government Administration places legality, protection of citizens' rights, and prevention of abuse of authority at the core of administrative governance. Following the enactment of this Law, the concept of administrative decisions has also developed beyond the classical meaning of a State Administrative Decision, thereby shifting and expanding the scope of judicial review of governmental action before the State Administrative Court (Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara, PTUN) (Harjiyatni & Suswoto, 2017; Pamungkas, 2020; Aji, 2020; Aritonang, Trilestari, & Gedeona, 2025).

Legal protection for the public in administrative law does not arise only after a dispute has occurred. Preventive protection operates before or during the formation of a decision, for example through verification of authority, compliance with procedural requirements, transparency of information, opportunities for affected parties to provide explanations, and assessment under the AUPB. Repressive protection operates once harm has arisen, including through administrative objections and appeals, complaints of maladministration through the available mechanisms, and litigation before the PTUN. These two layers of protection must complement each other because even a strong judicial mechanism cannot replace the need for orderly and careful administration from the outset (Putrijanti, Leonard, & Utama, 2018; Solechan, 2019; Susanto, 2021).

Administrative remedies occupy a strategic position in the system of legal protection because they allow government bodies or officials to correct their own decisions without immediately transferring the dispute to a court. Following the enactment of the Government Administration Law and Supreme Court Regulation Number 6 of 2018, the relationship between administrative remedies and access to the PTUN has become increasingly important. The literature indicates that administrative remedies can function as a relatively quick and simple internal correction mechanism, although their effectiveness depends on clear procedures, the objectivity of reviewers, notification of citizens' rights, and consistent application of time limits (Sugiharto & Abrianto, 2018; Safitri & Sa'adah, 2021; Latief & Chandra, 2020).

The West Java context is important because the provincial government and regency/city governments exercise a broad range of service-delivery and regulatory powers. In addition, the Bandung State Administrative Court provides a forum for judicial control over administrative decisions issued by government bodies or officials within its territorial jurisdiction. Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG provides a concrete illustration of legal protection in a dispute involving a local government decision. The dispute arose from Cirebon Regent Decision Number 888/Kep/260/BKPSDM/2019 dated 28 May 2019 concerning the dishonorable dismissal of a civil servant. The plaintiff had pursued an objection and an administrative appeal before filing the lawsuit. The panel of judges then examined authority, procedure, substance, and the principles of good governance in determining the validity of the decision.

A particularly significant feature of the decision is its distinction between a defect of authority and the substantive basis of the administrative decision. The court found that the official who issued the disputed decision while serving in an acting capacity was subject to limitations in making strategic personnel decisions that altered an employee's legal status, and therefore regarded the decision as defective in terms of authority. At the same time, however, the court held that the substantive grounds for dismissal were not necessarily contrary to law. Consequently, the legal protection granted did not eliminate the possibility that the government could issue a new decision with similar substantive content, provided that it was issued by a properly authorized official through a lawful process. This dimension confirms that administrative-law protection safeguards the legality of the process and the structure of authority, rather than merely guaranteeing a substantive victory for the claimant.

Previous studies have discussed the AUPB as standards for reviewing governmental action (Widjiastuti, 2017; Putrijanti et al., 2018; Susanto, 2021), the transformation of administrative remedies (Marbun, 2017; Sugiharto & Abrianto, 2018; Safitri & Sa'adah, 2021), changes in the jurisdiction of the PTUN following the Government Administration Law (Harjiyatni & Suswoto, 2017; Pamungkas, 2020; Maridjo, 2022), and problems in the enforcement of PTUN judgments (Utama & Erliyana, 2020; Putra, 2021). A study specifically addressing Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG has also highlighted the relevance of the principle of due care (Kesuma, Adriani, Simanjorang, & Ramadhan, 2025). Nevertheless, further analysis is needed to connect preventive protection, administrative remedies, PTUN control, and compliance with judgments within a single model of legal protection applicable to local-government governance in West Java. Recent scholarship likewise reaffirms the importance of access to protection against detrimental state administrative decisions (Effendi & Arfendi, 2026).

Against this background, this article raises two research questions. First, how is legal protection for the public against local government administrative decisions constructed under Indonesian administrative law? Second, how can such protection be applied and strengthened in the context of local governments in West Java, viewed through Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG? The study aims to explain the relationship among the available legal-protection instruments and to formulate measures that can reduce disputes while improving the accountability of local-government decisions. The contribution of this article lies in developing a layered legal-protection model that places pre-decision legality, administrative correction, judicial review, and post-judgment compliance within a single governance continuum.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Legal protection in government administration arises from the need to balance two interests. On the one hand, government requires authority in order to act effectively in the public interest. On the other hand, citizens require guarantees that such authority will not be exercised arbitrarily. Administrative law therefore not only provides a legal basis for governmental action, but also establishes limits, procedures, standards, and control mechanisms. Ridwan H.R. (2018) identifies the principles of legality, authority, and protection of citizens as central elements of the public-law relationship between government and society. In recent developments, such protection has increasingly emphasized the quality of reasons for decisions, transparency, accountability, and access to effective remedies.

Functionally, legal protection can be situated in two domains. Preventive protection is intended to prevent defective decisions from arising by controlling the decision-making stage. Officials must verify the source and scope of authority, applicable procedures, evidence, the purpose for which authority is exercised, and the impact of the decision. Repressive protection is available after a dispute arises through administrative correction mechanisms and judicial proceedings. These two domains are not rigidly separated. The quality of repressive protection can encourage administrative bodies to improve preventive processes, while sound preventive procedures can reduce the volume of disputes and increase the legitimacy of decisions.

The AUPB serve as a bridge between formal legality and substantive administrative justice. Article 10 of Law Number 30 of 2014 sets out the principles of legal certainty, utility, impartiality, due care, non-abuse of authority, transparency, the public interest, and good service. These principles expand the standard of review beyond the question of whether a rule formally grants authority to the further questions of whether that authority is exercised rationally, carefully, transparently, impartially, and in accordance with its intended purpose. Studies by Solechan (2019), Widjiastuti (2017), and Susanto (2021) demonstrate that the AUPB function both as standards of governmental conduct and as grounds of assessment in judicial proceedings. Putrijanti et al. (2018) further connect the role of the AUPB and the PTUN with efforts to achieve good governance.

The concept of an administrative decision must also be read dynamically. Law Number 5 of 1986 on the State Administrative Court was enacted on the basis of a relatively formal conception of the object of dispute. Law Number 30 of 2014 subsequently broadened the landscape of administrative law through its conception of governmental decisions and actions, including authority, discretion, abuse of authority, and the AUPB. This change affects the absolute jurisdiction of the PTUN and the manner in which judges characterize the object of dispute (Harjiyatni & Suswoto, 2017; Prahastapa, Leonard, & Putrijanti, 2017; Pamungkas, 2020; Maridjo, 2022). Aji (2020) likewise identifies the expansion of judicial supervision over factual governmental actions as part of the development of administrative legal protection.

Administrative remedies are important because they provide a self-correction mechanism for government. An objection is generally examined by the official or body that issued the decision, whereas an administrative appeal is directed to a superior official or other competent body as provided by the applicable rules. Articles 75 to 78 of Law Number 30 of 2014 provide the general legal basis for objections and administrative appeals, while Supreme Court Regulation Number 6 of 2018 clarifies the relationship between administrative remedies and judicial jurisdiction after such remedies have been pursued. Safitri and Sa'adah (2021) emphasize that the availability of administrative remedies must be considered before litigation is initiated, while Sugiharto and Abrianto (2018) regard administrative remedies as a form of legal protection that should provide citizens with a simpler avenue for correction.

In civil-service disputes, the relationship between internal mechanisms and judicial proceedings is more complex. Marbun (2017) describes the transformation of civil-service dispute resolution in line with regulatory developments, while Azzahrawi, Djalil, and Idami (2019) highlight both the authority and constraints of the PTUN following the use of administrative remedies. Nuna, Moonti, Tumuhulawa, and Kodai (2020) show that disputes involving dishonorable dismissal require particular attention to authority, the legal grounds for dismissal, and the available dispute-resolution route. These studies are relevant to the Bandung PTUN decision because the disputed object concerned a change in employment status with direct and serious legal consequences. The issue of administrative remedies also intersects with the development of fictitious administrative decisions in civil-service administration (Susrama & Sukma, 2019).

The final stage in a theory of legal protection is not merely obtaining a judgment, but realizing it in practice. The executorial force of PTUN judgments is a longstanding issue because implementation in administrative law depends substantially on the compliance of government bodies or officials. Utama and Erliyana (2020) and Putra (2021) show that the effectiveness of judicial protection may be diminished where final and binding judgments are

not followed up promptly and consistently. An adequate model of legal protection must therefore connect prevention, administrative correction, judicial review, and post-judgment compliance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is normative or doctrinal legal research focusing on legal norms, principles, concepts, and judicial decisions. It employs statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. The statutory approach is used to examine the relationship among the legal regimes governing the State Administrative Court, Government Administration, Local Government, Public Services, and administrative remedies. The conceptual approach is used to construct the concepts of legal protection, the AUPB, authority, and accountability of administrative decisions. The case approach is used to analyze the application of those norms in Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG.

Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia; Law Number 5 of 1986 on the State Administrative Court and its amendments; Law Number 37 of 2008 on the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia; Law Number 25 of 2009 on Public Services; Law Number 23 of 2014 on Local Government and its amendments; Law Number 30 of 2014 on Government Administration as amended, among others, through Law Number 6 of 2023; Supreme Court Regulation Number 6 of 2018; and Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG. Secondary legal materials consist of relevant journal articles and books on administrative law, with priority given to literature from the last ten years.

Legal materials were collected through documentary and literature studies. The analysis is qualitative and prescriptive and proceeds in three stages. First, it identifies the standards governing the validity of administrative decisions in terms of authority, procedure, substance, and the AUPB. Second, it maps the avenues of protection available to citizens from the pre-decision stage through the post-judgment stage. Third, it examines the coherence between legal norms and their application in the Bandung PTUN case in order to formulate a strengthening model relevant to local governments in West Java. The study does not empirically measure practices across all regency and city governments; accordingly, findings concerning institutional challenges are presented as normative analysis and governance recommendations rather than statistical generalizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Construction of Legal Protection against Local Government Administrative Decisions

A lawful administrative decision cannot be justified merely because its policy objective is acceptable. Its validity must be supported by a competent official, proper procedure, legally permissible substance, and an exercise of authority consistent with the AUPB. This framework is important because a defect in any one of these elements may harm citizens and undermine the legitimacy of the decision. In local government practice, these risks increase where a decision affects an individual's legal status, such as the dismissal of a civil servant, revocation of a license, imposition of an administrative sanction, or termination of a public benefit.

The first dimension is authority. Public authority derives from law and cannot be presumed merely from an official title or organizational necessity. An official must be able to identify the source of authority and its substantive, territorial, temporal, and conditional limits. The distinction between the authority of a definitive officeholder and that of an acting official is particularly relevant because an action that appears administratively routine may be strategic when it permanently alters a person's legal status. Juliani (2020) emphasizes that official accountability is closely related to the limits on the exercise of authority and the prevention of abuse. Verification of authority should therefore serve as a legal checkpoint before any high-impact decision is signed.

The second dimension is procedure. Procedure should not be regarded as a mere administrative formality because it is the means through which decisions are based on adequate information and affected parties are protected. Document verification, factual examination, notification, opportunities to provide clarification, internal consultation, and the recording of reasons may form part of the required procedure depending on the nature of the authority and the applicable sectoral rules. The principle of due care reinforces these obligations: facts must be adequately verified and the relevance of the evidence to the legal basis must be explainable. Kesuma et al. (2025) demonstrate the importance of the principle of due care in interpreting the civil-service dispute addressed in Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG.

The third dimension concerns the substance and purpose of the exercise of authority. A decision must have a relevant legal basis, pursue a legitimate objective, and must not employ authority for a collateral or improper purpose. At this point, the principles of legal certainty, utility, impartiality, non-abuse of authority, the public interest, and good service operate together. The reformulation of the concept of invalidity in administrative decisions indicates

that the legal consequences of a defect must be assessed carefully according to the type of defect and the statutory framework, rather than on the assumption that every deficiency necessarily produces the same consequence (Efendi, Sudarsono, Edwinarta, & Musthafa, 2024).

The fourth dimension is the statement of reasons. Although not every form of decision uses the same structure of reasoning, a decision that imposes a burden or causes detriment should make its factual and legal grounds traceable. Reason-giving functions as an accountability mechanism: citizens can understand why a decision was made, officials are encouraged to assess evidence rationally, superiors can conduct meaningful correction, and judges have a record of the administrative reasoning if the dispute reaches court. From a public-service perspective, transparency of reasons and information concerning the right to object form part of citizen-oriented administration (Solechan, 2019; Aris, Tambunan, Putri, & Nugraha, 2022).

From these four dimensions, preventive protection can be formulated as an organizational obligation of local government to ensure legality before a decision is issued. The mechanism may take the form of an authority checklist, legal review by a competent unit for high-risk decisions, conflict-of-interest screening, factual verification, and an AUPB assessment. The objective is not to lengthen bureaucracy, but to reduce the costs of correction after a decision has caused harm. The more serious the effect of a decision on an individual's rights or status, the more rigorous the review that should be applied.

Administrative Remedies as an Internal Correction Mechanism

When members of the public consider themselves harmed by a governmental decision or action, Law Number 30 of 2014 provides a general framework of administrative remedies in the form of objections and appeals. Articles 75 to 78 regulate citizens' right to pursue administrative remedies and specify applicable time limits, while sectoral provisions may establish more specific procedures. Supreme Court Regulation Number 6 of 2018 subsequently regulates the adjudication of government-administration disputes after administrative remedies have been pursued. Under this system, administrative remedies are not merely procedural prerequisites; they are part of a protective design that encourages government to undertake internal correction before a dispute is decided by a judge.

The principal advantages of administrative remedies are the possibility of faster resolution, lower costs, and a broader scope of correction than a court's legality review. Administrative officials or their superiors may, in principle, reassess facts, policy considerations, and administrative appropriateness within the limits of their authority. These advantages, however, arise only if the mechanism is designed objectively. If an objection is merely returned to the same unit without independent assessment, access to documents, or reasons for the decision on the objection, self-correction becomes a formality. Sugiharto and Abrianto (2018) and Safitri and Sa'adah (2021) identify the effectiveness of administrative remedies as an important factor in protecting citizens' rights before litigation in the PTUN.

Because administrative routes may vary by sector, local governments should provide clear notice in every decision that may adversely affect a person. Ideally, the notice should state whether an objection or appeal is available, where it should be submitted, the applicable deadline, required documents, submission channels, and the legal consequences of failing to pursue the remedy. Such information reduces the knowledge imbalance between the administration and citizens. It is also consistent with legal certainty because citizens should not lose access to a remedy simply because the relevant procedure is difficult to discover.

Technology can strengthen administrative remedies when it is designed as a system for evidencing procedural steps rather than merely as a channel for submitting documents. An electronic objections portal should generate a registration number, receipt, procedural status, resolution deadline, and a copy of the decision on the objection or appeal. A digital audit trail facilitates internal supervision and provides evidence if the dispute proceeds to court. This model is particularly relevant to local governments in West Java, which serve a large population and operate with varying levels of administrative capacity across jurisdictions.

Judicial Review by the State Administrative Court

If administrative remedies do not provide relief, the PTUN offers independent external control. The function of the court is not to replace government officials in policymaking, but to determine whether a decision or action remains within legal boundaries. Developments following Law Number 30 of 2014 demonstrate the expansion and reconfiguration of the relationship among objects of dispute, governmental actions, and PTUN jurisdiction (Harjiyatni & Suswoto, 2017; Pamungkas, 2020; Maridjo, 2022). Administrative judicial review is therefore an instrument of the rule of law that ensures discretion and authority do not become arbitrary action.

PTUN review provides legal protection in at least three respects. First, the court offers an adversarial forum in which citizens and government may present arguments and evidence before an independent adjudicator. Second, judgments provide legal assessments that can clarify the limits of authority and the standards embodied in the AUPB. Third, a judgment may order revocation of a decision or other administrative action in accordance with the applicable legal framework. Institutionally, judgments also send a corrective signal to local governments to improve similar procedures in other decisions.

Judicial protection is effective, however, only if judgments are implemented. The literature on the execution of PTUN judgments identifies problems of compliance and limited coercive force that may reduce the practical value of a citizen's judicial victory (Utama & Erliyana, 2020; Putra, 2021). Local governments therefore need internal mechanisms to record final and binding judgments, designate units responsible for follow-up, set internal deadlines for corrective action, and report completion to their leadership. Such a compliance register transforms implementation from an ad hoc response into a measurable organizational obligation.

Layered Legal Protection Matrix

Table 1. Matrix of Legal Protection against Local Government Administrative Decisions

Stage	Instrument	Main legal basis/standard	Protective function
Before the decision	Review of authority, facts, procedure, reasons, and the AUPB	Law 30/2014; sectoral regulations; AUPB	Prevents defective decisions and reduces the risk of harm to citizens.
After the decision - internal	Objection and/or administrative appeal under the applicable regime	Law 30/2014; sectoral rules; Supreme Court Regulation 6/2018	Provides an opportunity for self-correction and relief without full judicial proceedings.
Public-service oversight	Public-service and/or maladministration complaints through the competent mechanisms	Law 25/2009; Law 37/2008	Encourages service correction, accountability, and administrative improvement.
Judicial review	Lawsuit before the PTUN after relevant requirements and administrative remedies have been satisfied	State Administrative Court Law; Law 30/2014; Supreme Court Regulation 6/2018	Provides independent control over the legality of governmental decisions/actions.
Post-judgment	Revocation, issuance of a new decision, or other measures in accordance with the operative order	Final and binding judgment; PTUN enforcement provisions	Ensures meaningful relief and promotes institutional learning.

Source: compiled from Law 30/2014, the State Administrative Court Law, Law 25/2009, Law 37/2008, and Supreme Court Regulation 6/2018.

Analysis of Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG

Case Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG can be used as a case study to examine how layered protection operates. The object of dispute was Cirebon Regent Decision Number 888/Kep/260/BKPSDM/2019 dated 28 May 2019 concerning the dishonorable dismissal of the plaintiff as a civil servant. Before filing the lawsuit, the plaintiff pursued an objection and an administrative appeal. The panel found that the formal requirements for access to the court had been satisfied and then examined the legality of the disputed decision in terms of authority, procedure, substance, and the principles of good governance.

The central issue concerned the authority of the official who issued the decision. At the time the decision was signed, the official was serving as Acting Regent of Cirebon. The court distinguished the authority of an acting officeholder from that of a definitive officeholder, particularly where a decision produces a strategic change in an employee's legal status. The panel held that, in the circumstances of the case, the acting official's authority did not extend to such an action, so the disputed decision was defective in terms of authority. This reasoning is significant because it confirms that authority is not merely an internal administrative matter; it is a guarantee to citizens that burdensome decisions may be made only by an organ legally entitled to make them.

At the same time, the court did not conclude that the substantive grounds for dismissal were wholly contrary to law. In its reasoning, the panel distinguished the validity of the substantive grounds from the validity of the official who took the decision. Because a definitive regent had subsequently taken office, the court directed correction through revocation of the defective decision and the issuance of a new decision by a competent official. This type of ruling illustrates a distinctive feature of administrative legal protection: the court corrects the legality of governmental action without taking over the administration's function of determining the replacement decision.

From the perspective of public legal protection, the decision yields four lessons. First, the right to pursue administrative remedies provides a formal avenue for contesting a decision before litigation. Second, the PTUN treats authority as a fundamental requirement, so substantive policy grounds cannot cure a defect of authority. Third, the AUPB—particularly the principle of due care—require officials to examine not only the facts concerning the affected person, but also the legal basis of their own authority. Fourth, legal relief may be corrective and procedural in nature: a citizen may obtain annulment of an unlawful decision, while the government may still act again if a substantive legal basis exists and authority is exercised correctly.

These findings add nuance to the concept of legal protection. Its effectiveness cannot be measured solely by whether the final substantive outcome favors the claimant. A more appropriate measure is whether the citizen receives a decision made by a competent official, through a reviewable procedure, on rational grounds, and with access to an independent forum for correction. This perspective also prevents the misconception that the PTUN must always substitute its own policy judgment for that of administrative officials. The principal function of the PTUN is to guarantee the legality of administration, while the administration retains decision-making space so long as it remains within legal limits.

Kesuma et al. (2025) emphasize the principle of due care in the same case. That emphasis may be complemented by a reading of the official judgment, which reveals the central importance of the official's competence in determining the legal consequences of the disputed decision. Due care and authority are in fact intertwined: a careful official not only examines the facts and evidence concerning the person affected by the decision, but also verifies whether the official has the proper legal authority to impose those consequences. An *ex ante* legal audit is therefore a preventive instrument that follows directly from the lessons of this case.

Challenges to Legal Protection in the Context of Local Governments in West Java

As a normative study, this article does not claim to have measured practices across all local governments in West Java. Nevertheless, several institutional risks can be identified from the applicable legal framework and the lessons of the Bandung PTUN case. The first is fragmented information concerning objection and appeal procedures. Citizens may face both general rules and sector-specific rules that differ from one another, so a decision that fails to provide information on available remedies may create uncertainty. In such circumstances, formal rights may exist while practical access remains weak.

The second risk is bias in self-correction. An objection reviewed without functional separation from the unit that made the original decision may create an institutional tendency to defend that decision. Local governments should therefore establish administrative-review standards requiring reassessment of authority, facts, procedure, substance, the AUPB, and the proportionality of consequences. For high-impact decisions, involvement of the legal bureau, inspectorate, or a cross-unit review team may improve the quality of correction, provided that independence and the allocation of responsibility are clearly defined.

The third risk is information asymmetry. Government possesses documents, archives, and procedural knowledge to a much greater extent than citizens. If copies of decisions, statements of reasons, and the underlying documents are difficult to obtain, citizens' ability to submit objections or bring litigation becomes unbalanced. Transparency—while continuing to respect data protection and lawful exceptions—is a prerequisite for a fair administrative process. From a good-governance perspective, transparency and good service are not accessories; they are legal qualities of the administrative process (Putrijanti et al., 2018; Solechan, 2019).

The fourth risk is non-compliance or delay in implementing judgments. A court judgment that is not translated into new administrative action may prolong the harm suffered by a citizen. The execution problems discussed by Utama and Erliyana (2020) and Putra (2021) demonstrate the need to internalize judgment-compliance obligations within government-management systems. Regional leaders should not have to wait for an escalation of the dispute before becoming aware that a judgment remains unimplemented.

A Model for Strengthening Legal Protection in West Java Local Governments

Based on the normative framework and the case study, this article proposes a layered legal-protection model comprising five components. First, *ex ante* legality review for high-impact decisions. Before signature, a draft decision should be examined through a checklist covering, at minimum, the source and limits of authority, the status of the signing official, mandatory procedures, key evidence, the AUPB, the legal basis, and the available forms of remedy. Where an official serves in an acting or temporary capacity, the limits of that official's authority should be a specific review item.

Second, a requirement of reason-giving and notice of remedies. Adverse decisions should provide adequate factual and legal reasons and include operational information concerning administrative remedies. Local governments can standardize a section on the "right to submit an objection/appeal" in their decision templates. At a minimum, the notice should identify the legal basis of the remedy, the authority to which it must be submitted, the applicable time limit, and the service channel. This simple measure can reduce procedural disputes arising from citizens' lack of information and strengthen legal certainty.

Third, a traceable one-stop administrative-remedies system. Local governments can provide a single portal or integrated service desk for receiving objections, after which the system routes the matter to the competent official according to sector. Citizens should receive a receipt, an administrative case number, case status information, and a written decision. Digitalization must not eliminate offline channels for groups with limited access, so the system should be multichannel and inclusive.

Fourth, quality assurance through independent internal review. The examination of an objection should not merely defend the original decision, but should reassess authority, procedure, facts, purpose, the AUPB, and impact. Local governments can develop review guidelines requiring the reviewer to answer each ground of objection expressly. Aggregated data from successful objections may then be used as an indicator of the units or types of decisions most frequently affected by defects, enabling preventive improvement.

Fifth, a judgment-compliance register. Every final and binding PTUN judgment should be entered into a compliance register containing the case number, operative order, required actions, responsible unit, internal deadline, implementation status, and evidence of follow-up. The register should be monitored by the legal function or inspectorate and reported periodically to the regional head or regional secretary. This mechanism transforms judicial decisions into a source of institutional learning rather than treating them solely as individual case management.

Together, these five components form a "prevent-correct-review-comply-learn" cycle. Prevention reduces defective decisions; correction creates space for self-correction; review guarantees independent control; compliance ensures meaningful relief; and learning converts dispute outcomes into improvements in standard operating procedures, templates, and official capacity. The model does not require a fundamental change to the existing legal structure, but it does require consistency of implementation, documentation, and administrative leadership. With this approach, legal protection can operate in harmony with the objective of efficient government.

CONCLUSION

Legal protection for the public against local government administrative decisions is a layered system that begins before a decision is issued and ends only after effective relief has been implemented. At the preventive stage, protection depends on lawful authority, proper procedure, careful examination of facts, reviewable reasons, transparency, and compliance with the AUPB. Once a decision causes harm, citizens have access to corrective channels through administrative remedies under Law Number 30 of 2014 and applicable sectoral provisions, and may bring the matter before the PTUN after the relevant requirements have been satisfied. The value of protection does not end with a judgment; implementation of the judgment is necessary for relief to become effective in practice.

Bandung State Administrative Court Decision Number 123/G/2019/PTUN-BDG concretely demonstrates that a defect of authority can determine the validity of a local government decision. The court annulled a decision issued by an official who, in the circumstances of the case, was found not to possess the authority to make a strategic decision altering civil-service status, even though the substantive grounds for dismissal were not wholly rejected. The judgment confirms that administrative legal protection is not a guarantee that the ultimate outcome will always

favor the citizen; rather, it guarantees that any legal consequence imposing a burden on a citizen may arise only from a competent official through a lawful and accountable process.

In practical terms, local governments in West Java should strengthen five instruments: legality review before high-impact decisions are issued; standardized statements of reasons and notice of objection/appeal rights; an accessible and traceable administrative-remedies system; internal review that reassesses authority, facts, procedure, substance, and the AUPB; and a compliance register for PTUN judgments. The combination of these measures can reduce the risk of disputes while improving the quality of public decision-making and public confidence in local administration.

This study is limited by its normative approach and its use of a single Bandung PTUN judgment as the primary case study; it is therefore not intended to provide a statistical description of dispute patterns across all local governments in West Java. Future research may undertake comparative empirical studies among regencies and cities concerning access to administrative remedies, the types of decision defects most frequently litigated, the time required to resolve objections, and rates of compliance with PTUN judgments. Such empirical findings would help test the effectiveness of the layered legal-protection model proposed in this article.

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