

POSITION PAPER ON DPWH 2026 BUDGET

by Amlig Antique Alliance submitted to the House Task Force on People's Participation (TFPP)

The Amlig Antique Alliance, a network of environmental advocates, community leaders, and concerned citizens of Antique, respectfully submits this position paper to express our grave concerns regarding the use of public funds by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for infrastructure projects in our province that systematically violate environmental laws and cause irreparable harm to our ecosystems and communities.

We bring this to the attention of the Committee on Appropriations to urge that the national budget ceases to be an instrument for financing illegal, destructive, and improperly vetted projects. We appeal to this Committee to exercise its power of the purse to impose strict conditionalities on the DPWH budget, ensuring that taxpayer money is spent only on projects that are fully compliant with all legal and environmental safeguards.

Systemic Violations in Antique Province Funded by DPWH

Multiple large-scale infrastructure projects funded through the DPWH and endorsed by legislators have deliberately circumvented environmental law through the following patterns:

A. Project Splitting to Evade Environmental Scrutiny

The Panay East-West Lateral Road (PEWLR)—a ₱2.6 billion, 41-kilometer corridor cutting through the Central Panay Mountain Range (a Key Biodiversity Area)—was divided into smaller contracts by the DPWH. This segmentation allowed the use of Certificates of Non-Coverage (CNCs) in place of full Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), illegally evading cumulative impact assessment and meaningful public scrutiny mandated by the Philippine EIS System (PD 1586).

B. Disregard for Social and Local Governance Protocols

Project splitting has also been used by project proponents to bypass requirements for Local Government Unit (LGU) endorsement and genuine community consultation. This practice marginalizes fishing, farming, and indigenous communities, violating the principles of social acceptability and local autonomy under the Local Government Code.

C. Construction in Environmentally Critical Areas

DPWH-funded projects, including seawalls, esplanades, and coastal roads, are being constructed illegally within foreshore zones, near marine sanctuaries, and in critical habitats without the proper category level of Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs) or Foreshore Lease Agreements, in direct violation of the Water Code and other laws.

Emblematic Cases of DPWH-Funded Projects

- 1. Panay East-West Lateral Road (PEWLR), from Valderrama extending to Laua-an and Pandan, Antique corridor**

- Funded and implemented by DPWH through subdivided contracts awarded to contractors including Sunwest, IBC, and Allencon.
 - Crosses the Central Panay Mountain Range, a vital watershed and biodiversity corridor.
 - Lacks a programmatic EIS and proceeds under invalid CNCs due to project splitting.
2. **San Jose Esplanade / Coastal Road**
- A DPWH project constructed illegally within foreshore zones, adjacent to a municipal marine protected area, and marine turtle nesting sites without a proper ECC.
 - Contractors include J.E. Tico, Allencon, and A.D. Pendon.
 - Has caused burial of coral reefs and destruction of turtle nests.
3. **Sabang West "Turtle Beach Nesting Boulevard"**
- Branded as eco-tourism yet directly damages critically endangered turtle habitats. This DPWH project exemplifies how "green" labels are used to disguise ecologically destructive initiatives.
4. **Erosion from DPWH Road Projects**
- Uncontrolled erosion and inadequate siltation control from ongoing road projects have led to the sedimentation of rivers and coastal waters, damaging fisheries and marine ecosystems.

Appeal and Recommendations to the House Committee on Appropriations

The patterns of violation in Antique are not isolated. They are part of a national crisis now exposed in the DPWH flood-control project mess, revealing a deeply entrenched system of contractor favoritism, project splitting, and a catastrophic failure of regulatory compliance. The same contractors implicated nationally are destroying Antique's ecological frontiers through the same methods, funded by the DPWH budget.

We therefore urge this Committee to use its constitutional power over the purse to halt this system of abuse. We recommend the following actions:

1. **Impose Strict Budget Conditionalities:** Withhold or make contingent a portion of the DPWH's budget—particularly for new infrastructure projects—on strict compliance with environmental laws. Release of funds should be conditional upon:
 - **Certification of Full EIS Compliance:** Require the DPWH to submit a certification from the DENR that each project has undergone the proper environmental review process without resorting to project splitting. Projects subdivided to avoid an EIS must be denied funding.
 - **Proof of Social Acceptability:** Require documented proof of LGU endorsement and completion of genuine, good-faith community consultations for all projects.
2. **Conduct a Funding Trail Review:** Investigate the source of funding for the implicated Antique projects to determine whether they underwent proper technical vetting via the National Expenditure Program (NEP) or were inserted via the General Appropriations Act (GAA) without the required feasibility studies or NEDA-ICC review.

3. **Blacklist Repeat-Offender Contractors:** Mandate that the DPWH blacklist contractors who have repeatedly and blatantly violated environmental laws in the implementation of government projects, including but not limited to Sunwest, IBC, J.E. Tico, and Allencon.
4. **Summon DPWH Officials:** Require the DPWH Secretary and relevant regional directors to appear before this Committee to explain these systemic lapses in Antique and to present a concrete plan for corrective measures, including project modifications, suspensions, or cancellations where necessary.
5. **Mandate Proactive Disclosure:** Impose a condition requiring the DPWH to establish a public, online database for all its projects, including ECCs, CNCs, detailed engineering designs, and contract details. This will ensure transparency and allow for citizen oversight.

Conclusion

The ongoing destruction in Antique, funded by public money, must stop. The DPWH cannot be allowed to continue building infrastructure at the expense of our environment, our livelihoods, and our future.

We urge this Committee to ensure that not another peso of public money is granted to the DPWH without strict conditionalities that force it to:

- **Stop the practice of project splitting** and ensure all projects undergo comprehensive environmental review.
- **Blacklist repeat-offender contractors** who operate with impunity.
- **Uphold the law without exception** and ensure that all DPWH projects in Antique and across the country are legally and technically sound.

We trust in the wisdom and vigilance of this Committee to safeguard the people's money and our nation's natural heritage.