

NPR Wins \$36M Grant As CPB Backs Off Plan To Cut Funds

By **Jared Foretek**

Law360 (November 18, 2025, 4:21 PM EST) -- National Public Radio and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting have reached a settlement to keep nearly \$36 million in public radio satellite interconnection funds with NPR, as CPB agreed not to implement an executive order requiring it to cut off NPR funding unless ordered to do so by a court.

The deal on Monday settles one lingering conflict between the two entities at the center of a broader challenge to President Donald Trump's May executive order.

Following the executive order, CPB told NPR that it would break with nearly four decades of precedent by awarding its "public media infrastructure" grant to the newly formed Public Media Infrastructure coalition, or PMI, rather than NPR. The grant funds the operation and management of the Public Radio Satellite System.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, NPR will receive \$35.96 million in grant funding over five years, but CPB will enter into a separate five-year, \$47 million agreement with PMI.

NPR had claimed that a CPB executive gave assurances to NPR's board in April that NPR's proposal for the grant would be approved. But after Trump began targeting NPR in social media posts and issued the executive order, CPB backtracked, NPR said.

By statute, the CPB is obligated to award the funding to the "national entity" designated by the nation's public radio stations. Since 1985, public radio stations have designated NPR.

At an Oct. 30 hearing on the matter, U.S. District Judge Randolph D. Moss said that NPR had made a "very substantial showing" to support its claim that "CPB was motivated by a desire to show some compliance" with the Trump administration's "efforts to penalize NPR for its speech and the content of its speech." He also ordered CPB not to commit the funding to PMI until he had ruled on NPR's motion following a bench trial.

On Monday, the parties agreed to drop the issue, both claiming victory in statements.

NPR CEO Katherine Maher said in a statement Monday, "The settlement is a victory for editorial independence and a step toward upholding the First Amendment rights of NPR and the public media system in our legal challenge to Executive Order 14290."

"While we entered into this dispute with CPB reluctantly, we're glad to resolve it in a way that enables us to continue to provide for the stability of the Public Radio Satellite System, offer immediate and direct support to public radio stations across the country, and proceed with our strong and substantive claims against this illegal and unconstitutional Executive Order," Maher added. "We look forward to our day in court in December."

As part of the deal, CPB will remain a party to NPR's broader lawsuit challenging Trump's executive order, but CPB agreed that the order is unconstitutional, pledging not to implement it unless ordered to do so by a court.

NPR also dropped its bid to block CPB from awarding funding to PMI.

"This is an important moment for public media," CPB CEO Patricia Harrison said in a statement. "We are very pleased that this costly and unnecessary litigation is over, and that our investment in the future through PMI marks an exciting new era for public media."

NPR is represented by Miguel A. Estrada, Theodore J. Boutrous Jr. and Katie Townsend of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP, as well as in-house counsel Elizabeth A. Allen.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is represented by Jason W. McElroy, Peter C. Nanov, Jeffrey S. Robbins and Joseph D. Lipchitz of Saul Ewing LLP.

The federal government is represented by Brett A. Shumate, Yaakov M. Roth, Eric Hamilton, Sean Skedzielewski, Joseph E. Borson and Carmen M. Banerjee of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The case is National Public Radio, Inc. et al. v. Trump et al., case number 1:25-cv-01674, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

--Editing by Nicole Bleier.