PBS is slashing its budget in response to Trump’s attack on public media



In an email sent out to PBS station managers on Wednesday, PBS president and CEO Paula Kerger announced that the organization plans to cut its budget by 21 percent in order to offset some of the financial damage being caused by the Trump administration’s campaign to stop public media from receiving federal funding that was originally distributed by the CPB. Because of the recently passed bill, PBS, NPR, and all of both organizations’ affiliates will no longer receive the $1.1 billion that was previously set aside for them to use over the next two years.

In addition to the budget cuts, PBS’ board of directors also voted in favor of lowering the overall amount of dues it collects from member stations across the country by $35

million dollars — a reduction of about 15 percent from the $227 million it originally budgeted for back in June. Additionally, PBS is giving its member stations more time to plan out how they will raise the funds necessary to pay their dues, which are determined by a formula that accounts for how much nonfederal funding they receive.

The move to lower dues is meant to make it easier for PBS member stations — which air programming like *Sesame Street*, *PBS News Hour*, and *Finding Your Roots* — to deal with some of their own financial burdens. But Kerger was also clear in her memo that PBS as a whole is fighting an uphill battle to stay afloat.

“We recognize that even with the dues reduction, adjusted payment schedule and efforts to raise funds for initial financial stabilization, we all face hard choices about the future,” Kerger said. “We are stronger together, and together, we will continue to stay focused on our mission.”

Though the CPB is set to begin winding its operations down at the end of September, PBS and NPR — which have both historically relied on federal funding to help fund programming and pay employees — are not going away, at least, not yet. Earlier this month, NPR said that it is cutting its own budget by $8 million and using that money to set up a “fee relief” fund to help smaller member stations meet their needs. But the CPB’s dismantling is going to put a significant strain on the US’ largest public media broadcasters, particularly for smaller member stations in more rural areas across the country. In PBS’ case, this new budget cut is also likely to lead to layoffs.

https://www.theverge.com/news/760026/pbs-is-slashing-its-budget-in-response-to-trumps-attack-on-public-media