

PLS Settles Antitrust Dispute With Multiple Defendants



By [Andrew McIntyre](#)



Law360 (January 25, 2024, 1:47 PM EST) -- PLS.com has settled with multiple parties in an antitrust suit, although the deal does not apply to the National Association of Realtors, one of the defendants in the case, according to a California federal court filing.

At issue in the case was NAR's clear cooperation policy, which mandated that members of multiple listing services affiliated with the NAR that listed properties on PLS also list the properties on an MLS.

PLS has claimed the requirement is a violation of antitrust laws, and a district court earlier found PLS could not bring claims under the California Cartwright Act or Sherman Act because there wasn't any allegation of harm to sellers or buyers of homes.

The parties settled earlier this week.

"Plaintiff The PLS.com LLC and defendants Bright MLS Inc., Midwest Real Estate Data LLC and California Regional Multiple Listing Service Inc. ... have reached a settlement-in-principle of all claims between these parties in the above-referenced case," the Wednesday filing in California federal court said. "Plaintiff's claims against defendant the National Association of Realtors are not affected by the settlement-in-principle."

NAR and PLS.com couldn't be immediately reached for comment Thursday.

Real estate tech company The PLS.com launched in January 2021. The company's founding partners are Christopher Dyson, James Harris, David Parnes and Mauricio Umansky.

In April 2022, the Ninth Circuit reversed the earlier dismissal by the district court of PLS.com's complaint. That Ninth Circuit case was submitted and argued in January 2022.

The clear cooperation policy has been the subject of other litigation. The Ninth Circuit said last summer that a separate challenge could go forward.

"The plaintiffs across the country see the blood in the water and continue to file lawsuits aimed at NAR, trade associations, various multiple listing services and the country's largest real estate brokerages," Michael Romer, co-managing partner of Romer Debbas LLP, which is not involved in the case, told Law360 on Thursday. "Now, more than ever, the real estate market needs stability — stability with respect to interest rates, property valuations, inflation, threats of litigation and, maybe most importantly, the real estate brokerage community."

A status conference is set for Friday.

Robert Hicks, counsel for California Regional Multiple Listing Service Inc., declined to comment, as did Chris Renner, who represents PLS.com.

Additional counsel couldn't be immediately reached for comment Thursday.

Bright MLS Inc. is represented by Matthew Mock, Oscar Figueroa and Brian Schneider of ArentFox Schiff LLP.

The PLS.com LLC is represented by Chris Renner, Doug Litvack, Chris Abbott, Brandon Fox, Jan Larson and Chris Sheehan of Jenner & Block LLP.

Midwest Real Estate Data LLC is represented by Greg Casas of Greenberg Traurig LLP.

California Regional Multiple Listing Service Inc. is represented by Robert Hicks and Theodore Stream of Stream Kim Hicks Wrage & Alfaró PC.

The case is The PLS.com LLC v. The National Association of Realtors et al., case number 2:20-cv-04790-JWH-E, in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, Western Division.

--Additional reporting by Craig Clough and Nate Beck. Editing by Haylee Pearl.

Correction: An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that NAR had settled. The error has been corrected.

Update: This article has been updated to include a comment from Michael Romer.