



Office of the Attorney General  
State of Texas

DAN MORALES  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

September 24, 1997

Ms. Judith Doran  
Open Records Coordinator  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744

OR97-2163

Dear Ms. Doran:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 109957.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department received a request for a copy of the personnel records of game warden, Mr. Patrick A. Canan. You assert that the requested information is excepted from required public disclosure based on sections 552.103 and 552.117 of the Government Code. You have submitted representative samples of the requested information.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.103(a) of the Government Code reads as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information:

(1) relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature or settlement negotiations, to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party; and

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<sup>1</sup>In reaching our conclusion here, we assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. See Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988) (where requested documents are numerous and repetitive, governmental body should submit representative sample; but if each record contains substantially different information, all must be submitted). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(2) that the attorney general or the attorney of the political subdivision has determined should be withheld from public inspection.

To secure the protection of section 552.103(a), a governmental body must demonstrate that requested information "relates" to a pending or reasonably anticipated judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding. Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the applicability of an exception in a particular situation. The test for establishing that section 552.103 applies is a two-prong showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210 (Tex. App.--Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.). In this instance, you have made the requisite showing that the requested information relates to pending litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). The requested records may be withheld.<sup>2</sup>

We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Kay Hastings  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KHH/rho

Ref.: ID# 109957

Enclosures: Submitted documents

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<sup>2</sup>If the opposing party in the litigation has seen or had access to any of the information in these records, there would be no justification for now withholding that information from the requestor pursuant to section 552.103(a). Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). In addition, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation is concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982). We note that some of the information in the file may be covered by section 552.117 of the Government Code and therefore must be withheld from public disclosure even at the conclusion of the litigation.

cc: Mr. Raymond G. Wheless  
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1400 Preston Road, Suite 200  
Plano, Texas 75093  
(w/o enclosures)

