



July 30, 2001

Ms. Pamela Smith
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Public Safety
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2001-3286

Dear Ms. Smith:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 150035.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for information regarding a specified vehicle. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and have reviewed the submitted information.

You claim that the submitted Texas Criminal Information Center ("TCIC") transaction log is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code. Section 552.108 provides in pertinent part:

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted . . . if:

(1) release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(b). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 as an exception to disclosure of requested information must demonstrate how and why release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code

§§ 552.108(a), (b), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the submitted TCIC transaction log which reflects entries and inquiries regarding a specific vehicle is maintained by the department for the purpose of managing and monitoring the TCIC/NCIC databases that are administered by the department. You also state that the release of this kind of log could reveal when law enforcement is tracking certain vehicles as being suspected stolen vehicles. Finally, you state that a suspect with this information would have a distinct advantage in efforts of avoiding detection and apprehension by law enforcement. Therefore, we agree that the release of this information would interfere with law enforcement. *See Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1)*. Accordingly, the submitted TCIC transaction log may be withheld from disclosure pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. *Gov't Code § 552.301(f)*. If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

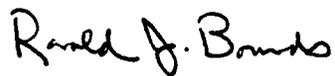
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Ronald J. Bounds
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RJB/seg

Ref: ID# 150035

Enc. Submitted document

cc: Ms. Tracy Boston
P.O. Box 744
Prosper, Texas
(w/o enclosures)