OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL · STATE OF TEXAS
JOHN CORNYN

July 11, 2002

Ms. Elizabeth Murray-Kolb
Guadalupe County Attorney
101 East Court Street, Suite 104
Seguin, Texas 78155

OR2002-3764

Dear Ms. Murray-Kolb:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 165432.

The Guadalupe County Attorney (the "county attorney") received two requests for information pertaining to allegations or complaints against a county official. The first requestor seeks "any and all relevant public documents produced by either your office or the Texas Attorney General's Office (the "OAG")." The second requestor seeks "a copy of your letter to the [OAG] requesting help in investigating allegations against" a named county official. This requestor also seeks the "[OAG's] report detailing findings of the investigation." You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information. We have also considered the comments submitted to this office by the Prosecutor Assistance Division of the OAG. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (permitting interested party to submit reasons why requested information should or should not be released).

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code provides that information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from required public disclosure if:

> (2) it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). The OAG's Prosecutor Assistance Division indicates that the requested information relates to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Accordingly, we conclude that the county attorney may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2). *Cf.* Attorney General Opinion No. MW-575 at 1-2 (1982) (non-law enforcement agency may claim law enforcement exception for closed files where a law enforcement agency has determined that release would unduly interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention), Open Records Decision No. 272 (1981) (since information may be transferred between governmental agencies without destroying its confidential character, records which otherwise qualify for law enforcement exception do not necessarily lose that status while in custody of agency not directly involved in law enforcement).

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).

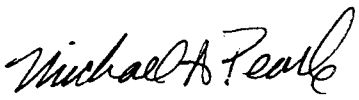
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following 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 Texas Building and Procurement 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. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. 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,



Michael A. Pearle
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MAP/jh

Ref: ID# 165342

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Roger Croteau
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