OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL · STATE OF TEXAS
JOHN CORNYN

August 1, 2002

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

OR2002-4231

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# 166616.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for the original applications for Texas driver's licenses and any subsequent renewals or amendments for two named individuals. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides:

> (a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if the information relates to:
>
> > (1) a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state;
> >
> > (2) a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state; or
> >
> > (3) a personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or a local agency authorized to issue an identification document.
>
> (b) Information described by Subsection (a) may be released only if, and in the manner, authorized by Chapter 730, Transportation Code.

Gov't Code § 552.130. The documents you seek to withhold under section 552.130 consist of driver's license application records and copies of driver's licenses. We agree that the submitted information relates to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license issued by this state under section 552.130(a)(1). Therefore, this information may be released only in accordance with chapter 730 of the Transportation Code. *See id.* § 552.130(b), Transp. Code §§ 730.003-.007. You state and we agree that chapter 730 does not authorize the department to release the information in question in this instance. Therefore, the department must withhold the requested information in its entirety under section 552.130 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 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,

Karen A. Eckerle
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KAE/sdk

Ref: ID# 166616

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Les Zaitz
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(w/o enclosures)