



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

July 13, 2004

Mr. James M. Frazier III  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
P.O. Box 4004  
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2004-5750

Dear Mr. Frazier:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 205006.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for a copy of a specified contract with Northrop Grumman Technical Services, Inc. (Northrop) and any other information related to this contract. You claim that a portion of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.136 of the Government Code. Additionally, you have notified Northrop, an interested third party, of the department's receipt of the request for information pursuant to section 552.305 of the Government Code. *See Gov't Code* § 552.305 (permitting interested third party to submit to attorney general reasons why requested information should not be released); Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining that statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in Public Information Act in certain circumstances). We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that you have only submitted one document to this office for review. To the extent that any additional requested information existed upon the department's receipt of the request for information, we assume it has been released. If not, you must do so at this time. *See Gov't Code* §§ 552.006, .301, .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (noting that if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

You assert that the submitted insurance policy number is confidential under section 552.136 of the Government Code, which states that "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of this

chapter, a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential.” Gov’t Code § 552.136. Thus, pursuant to this section, we agree that the department must withhold the submitted insurance policy number.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body’s notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this decision, Northrop has not submitted to this office any reasons explaining why its information should not be released. Therefore, Northrop has provided us with no basis to conclude that it has a protected proprietary interest in any of the submitted information. *See, e.g.*, Gov’t Code § 552.110(b) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual or evidentiary material, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that it actually faces competition and that substantial competitive injury would likely result from disclosure); Open Records Decision Nos. 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3 (1990). Therefore, the remaining submitted information must be released.

In summary, we conclude that the department must withhold the submitted insurance policy number under section 552.136 of the Government Code. All remaining requested information must be released.

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 Dep't of Pub. 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,



W. Montgomery Meitler  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

WMM/sdk

Ref: ID# 205006

Enc: Submitted documents

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