



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 24, 2006

Ms. Katherine Powers  
Assistant City Attorney  
Dallas Police Department  
1400 S. Lamar Street  
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2006-09818

Dear Ms. Powers:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 257583.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for all electronic communications sent or received by a specific person from April 1, 2006 through June 7, 2006. You claim that the responsive information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.117, 552.1175, 552.127, 552.130, 552.136, and 552.137 of the Government Code.

Section 552.301 of the Government Code describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information that it wishes to withhold. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) general written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *Id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A)-(D). You state that the department received the request for information on June 7, 2006. Thus, the fifteen day deadline to comply with section 552.031(e) was June 28, 2006. However, as of the date of this letter you have not submitted a copy or representative sample of the requested information, nor written comments stating the reasons why the exceptions that you raised would allow the requested information to be withheld.

Accordingly, we conclude that you have failed to comply with section 552.301 with respect to this information.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the information is public. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. Gov't Code § 552.302; *see also Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). Section 552.108 of the Government Code is a discretionary exception to disclosure that protects a governmental body's interests and may be waived by the governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision No. 177 (1977) (governmental body may waive statutory predecessor to section 552.108); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at (1977). Sections 552.101, 552.117, 552.1175, 552.127, 552.130, 552.136, and 552.137 of the Government Code can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness; however, because you have not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis to find that sections 552.101, 552.117, 552.1175, 552.127, 552.130, 552.136, and 552.137 are applicable to the requested information. Thus, we have no choice but to order you to release the requested information in accordance with section 552.302 of the Government Code. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge the ruling in court as outlined below.

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the

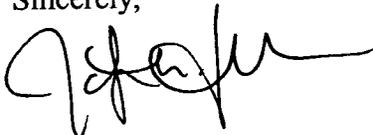
Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor 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 Office of the Attorney General 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,



Jaclyn N. Thompson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JNT/ir

Ref: ID# 257583

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. E.J. Brown  
Dallas Police Association  
1412 Griffin St. East  
Dallas, TX 75215  
(w/o enclosures)