



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 17, 2006

Mr. Scott A. Kelly
Deputy General Counsel
Texas A&M System
Office of General Counsel
200 Technology Way, Suite 2079
College Station, Texas 77845-3424

OR2006-12189

Dear Mr. Kelly:

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# 262408.

The Texas A&M University System (the "system") received a request for the current "Wells Fargo Account Analysis Group Summary Statement." You claim that portions of the requested information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.136 of the Government Code. You also contend that the requested information may implicate the proprietary interests of third party Wells Fargo Bank ("Wells Fargo"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, that you notified Wells Fargo of the request for information and of Wells Fargo's right to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released. *See Gov't Code § 552.305(d); see also 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 to disclosure in certain circumstances).* We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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 letter, Wells Fargo has not submitted to this office any reasons explaining why its information should not be released. We thus have no basis for concluding that any portion of the submitted information relating to Wells Fargo constitutes proprietary information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of the requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3 (1990). Accordingly, we conclude that the system may not withhold any of the submitted information based on the proprietary interests of Wells Fargo.

We now turn to your claimed exception. Section 552.136 of the Government Code 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. The system must, therefore, withhold the marked bank account numbers under section 552.136. The remaining 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, 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,


Lisa V. Cubriel
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LVC/eb

Ref: ID# 262408

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Melisa Atkinson, CTP
Vice President
Global Treasury Services
Bank of America
515 Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-3503
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Annie Jackson
Public Fund Specialist
Wells Fargo Bank
3000 Briarcrest Drive
Bryan, Texas 77802
(w/o enclosures)