



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

December 6, 2007

Ms. Zandra L. Pulis  
Senior Counsel  
Legal Services Division  
CPS Energy  
P.O. Box 1771  
San Antonio, Texas 78296

OR2007-16102

Dear Ms. Pulis:

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# 296660.

The City Public Service Board of the City of San Antonio d/b/a CPS Energy ("CPS") received a request for six categories of information related to CPS's energy study of nuclear energy during a specified time period.<sup>1</sup> You state that CPS does not have any information responsive to a portion of the request.<sup>2</sup> You also state that a portion of the requested information will be provided to the requestor. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.104, 552.107, 552.111, and 552.133

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<sup>1</sup>You state that CPS received clarifications regarding this request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (governmental body may communicate with requestor for purpose of clarifying or narrowing request for information); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 663 (1999) (discussing tolling of deadlines during period in which governmental body is awaiting clarification).

<sup>2</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App. — San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup> We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information, a portion of which consists of a representative sample.<sup>4</sup> We have also considered comments submitted by the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Section 552.133 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a public power utility's information related to a competitive matter. Section 552.133(b) provides:

Information or records are excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if the information or records are reasonably related to a competitive matter, as defined in this section. Excepted information or records include the text of any resolution of the public power utility governing body determining which issues, activities, or matters constitute competitive matters. Information or records of a municipally owned utility that are reasonably related to a competitive matter are not subject to disclosure under this chapter, whether or not, under the Utilities Code, the municipally owned utility has adopted customer choice or serves in a multiply certificated service area. This section does not limit the right of a public power utility governing body to withhold from disclosure information deemed to be within the scope of any other exception provided for in this chapter, subject to the provisions of this chapter.

Gov't Code § 552.133(b). Section 552.133(a)(3) defines a "competitive matter" as a matter the public power utility governing body in good faith determines by vote to be related to the public power utility's competitive activity, and the release of which would give an advantage to competitors or prospective competitors. *See id.* § 552.133(a)(3). However, section 552.133(a)(3) also provides thirteen categories of information that may not be deemed competitive matters. The attorney general may conclude that section 552.133 is inapplicable to the submitted information only if, based on the information provided, the attorney general determines the public power utility governing body has not acted in good faith in determining that the issue, matter, or activity is a competitive matter or that the information submitted is not reasonably related to a competitive matter. *Id.* § 552.133(c).

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<sup>3</sup>Although you raise the attorney-client privilege under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with rule 503 of the Texas Rules of Evidence, we note that section 552.107 is the proper exception to raise for your attorney-client privilege claim in this instance. *See* Open Records Decision No. 676 (1988).

<sup>4</sup>We assume that the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

CPS is a public power utility for purposes of section 552.133. CPS informs us, and provides documentation showing, that the CPS Energy Board of Trustees (the “board”), as governing body of CPS, passed a resolution by vote pursuant to section 552.133 in which the board defined the information considered to be within the scope of the term “competitive matter.” CPS asserts that the submitted information comes within the scope of the resolution. The submitted information is not among the thirteen categories of information that section 552.133(a)(3) expressly excludes from the definition of competitive matter. Furthermore, we have no evidence that the board failed to act in good faith. *See id.* § 552.133(c). Consequently, we determine that the submitted information relates to a competitive matter in accordance with the submitted resolution. Therefore, CPS must withhold the submitted information pursuant to section 552.133 of the Government Code.<sup>5</sup>

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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, 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 challenge that decision by suing the governmental

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<sup>5</sup>As this ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

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,



Loan Hong-Turney  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LH/eeg

Ref: ID# 296660

Enc. Submitted documents

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