



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

February 26, 2009

Mr. Juan J. Cruz  
Escamilla & Poneck, Inc.  
216 West Village Boulevard, Suite 202  
Laredo, Texas 78041

OR2009-02518

Dear Mr. Cruz:

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# 336162.

The United Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for an investigation report regarding complaints made against the district's chief of police and the district's police department management. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.107 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note section 552.022 of the Government Code is applicable to the information at issue. Section 552.022(a)(1) provides for required public disclosure of "a completed report, audit, evaluation, or investigation made of, for, or by a governmental body[,]" unless the information is expressly confidential under other law or excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(1). In this instance, the information at issue consists of a completed report made for the district and thus is subject to section 552.022(a)(1). Although you seek to withhold the submitted information under section 552.107 of the Government Code, this section is a discretionary exception to disclosure that protects a governmental body's interests and may be waived. Open Records Decision No. 676 at 6 (2002) (stating that where section 552.022 is applicable to the information at issue the governmental body should raise Texas Rule of Evidence 503 not section 552.107 of the Government Code); Open Records Decision No. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally). As such, section 552.107 is not other law that makes information confidential for the purposes of section 552.022. Therefore, the district may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.107 of the Government Code. However, the attorney-client privilege is also found in Texas Rule of Evidence 503, which

can serve as other law for the purposes of section 552.022 of the Government Code. *See In re City of Georgetown*, 53 S.W.3d 328 (Tex. 2001) (addressing applicability of Texas Rule of Evidence 503 to information encompassed by section 552.022 of the Government Code). Thus, we will address your argument under this provision.

You contend that the submitted information is protected by the attorney-client privilege. Rule 503 of the Texas Rules of Evidence provides:

A client has a privilege to refuse to disclose and to prevent any other person from disclosing confidential communications made for the purpose of facilitating the rendition of professional legal services to the client:

(A) between the client or a representative of the client and the client's lawyer or a representative of the lawyer;

(B) between the lawyer and the lawyer's representative;

(C) by the client or a representative of the client, or the client's lawyer or a representative of the lawyer, to a lawyer or a representative of a lawyer representing another party in a pending action and concerning a matter of common interest therein;

(D) between representatives of the client or between the client and a representative of the client; or

(E) among lawyers and their representatives representing the same client.

TEX. R. EVID. 503(b)(1). A communication is "confidential" if not intended to be disclosed to third persons other than those to whom disclosure is made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the client or those reasonably necessary for the transmission of the communication. *Id.* 503(a)(5). Thus, in order to withhold attorney-client privileged information from disclosure under rule 503, a governmental body must: (1) show that the document is a communication transmitted between privileged parties or reveals a confidential communication; (2) identify the parties involved in the communication; and (3) show that the communication is confidential by explaining that it was not intended to be disclosed to third persons and that it was made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the client. Upon a demonstration of all three factors, the information is privileged and confidential under rule 503, provided the client has not waived the privilege or the document does not fall within the purview of the exceptions to the privilege enumerated in Rule 503(d). *Pittsburgh Corning Corp. v. Caldwell*, 861 S.W.2d 423, 427 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1993, no writ).

You explain that the submitted investigative report was created by an individual hired by, and acting under the supervision of, the district's counsel. You state that the submitted report was prepared for the purpose of facilitating the rendition of professional legal services. You state that the investigative report was communicated to the district's board members and attorneys. You further state that these communications were not intended to be disclosed to any third party, and that the confidentiality of the communications has been maintained. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude that the submitted investigative report is a privileged attorney-client communication. Therefore, the district may withhold the submitted investigative report under Texas Rule of Evidence 503. As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Sterner  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CDSA/eeg

Ref: ID# 336162

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)