



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 6, 2009

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

OR2009-10949

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# 351312.

The Texas A&M University System (the "system") received a request for non-confidential information regarding the winning bidder on a specific request for proposal for insurance claims administration, including scoring or grading sheets, financial analysis of the bidders, finalist presentations, and final rates. You state that scoring or grading sheets were not used in this evaluation process.<sup>1</sup> You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104 of the Government Code protects from required public disclosure "information which, if released, would give advantage to competitors or bidders." Gov't Code § 552.104. The purpose of section 552.104 is to protect the purchasing interests of a governmental body in competitive bidding situations where the governmental body wishes to withhold information in order to obtain more favorable offers. *See* Open Records Decision No. 592 (1991). Section 552.104 protects information from disclosure if the

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<sup>1</sup> We note that the Act does not require a governmental body to disclose information that did not exist at the time the request was received. *Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex.Civ.App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision No. 452 at 3 (1986).

governmental body demonstrates potential harm to its interests in a particular competitive situation. *See* Open Records Decision No. 463 (1987). Generally, section 552.104 does not except bids from disclosure after bidding is completed and the contract has been awarded. *See* Open Records Decision No. 541 (1990).

You state that although a proposal has been recommended, a final contract has not been signed. You assert release of the requested information at this stage in the bidding process would harm the system's ability to negotiate a final agreement. Based on your representations, we conclude the system may withhold the requested information under section 552.104 of the Government Code.

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,



Mack T. Harrison  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MTH/sdk

Ref: ID# 351312

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)