



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 21, 2010

Mr. Gary Grief
Deputy Executive Director
Texas Lottery Commission
P.O. Box 16630
Austin, Texas 78761-6630

OR2010-00966

Dear Mr. Grief:

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# 367954.

The Texas Lottery Commission (the "commission") received a request for "all documents and correspondence pertaining to the art and product approval process" for two specified submissions to the commission. You state that the commission will provide some of the requested information to the requestor. You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.137 of the Government Code. Although you take no position with respect to the public availability of the remaining requested information, you state that the submitted documents may contain proprietary information of third parties subject to exception under the Act. Accordingly, you provide documentation showing that the commission notified International Gamco, Inc. ("Gamco") and Tabco Inc. ("Tabco") of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). Gamco has responded to this notice. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of a governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) of the Government Code to submit its

reasons, if any, as to why requested information relating to that party should be withheld from disclosure. See Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, Tabco has not submitted comments to this office explaining why any portion of the submitted information relating to it should not be released to the requestor. Thus, we have no basis to conclude that the release of any portion of the submitted information would implicate the proprietary interests of Tabco. Accordingly, none of the information pertaining to Tabco may be withheld on that basis. See *id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (stating that business enterprise that claims exception for commercial or financial information under section 552.110(b) must show by specific factual evidence that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret).

We will now address the submitted arguments. Gamco asserts that section 552.110 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a portion of its information. Section 552.110 of the Government Code protects: (1) trade secrets and (2) commercial or financial information the disclosure of which would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained. Gov't Code § 552.110(a), (b).

Section 552.110(a) protects trade secrets obtained from a person and privileged or confidential by statute or judicial decision. *Id.* § 552.110(a). The Texas Supreme Court has adopted the definition of trade secret from section 757 of the Restatement of Torts. *Hyde Corp. v. Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d 763 (Tex. 1957); see also Open Records Decision No. 552 at 2. Section 757 provides that a trade secret is:

any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information which is used in one's business, and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know or use it. It may be a formula for a chemical compound, a process of manufacturing, treating or preserving materials, a pattern for a machine or other device, or a list of customers. It differs from other secret information in a business . . . in that it is not simply information as to single or ephemeral events in the conduct of the business A trade secret is a process or device for continuous use in the operation of the business [It may] relate to the sale of goods or to other operations in the business, such as a code for determining discounts, rebates or other concessions in a price list or catalogue, or a list of specialized customers, or a method of bookkeeping or other office management.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939); see also *Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d at 776. In determining whether particular information constitutes a trade secret, this office considers the Restatement's definition of trade secret as well as the Restatement's list of six trade secret factors. RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939).

The following are the six factors that the Restatement gives as indicia of whether information constitutes a trade secret:

- (1) the extent to which the information is known outside of the company;
- (2) the extent to which it is known by employees and others involved in the company's business;
- (3) the extent of measures taken by the company to guard the secrecy of the information;
- (4) the value of the information to the company and its competitors;
- (5) the amount of effort or money expended by the company in developing the information;
- (6) the ease or difficulty with which the information could be properly acquired or duplicated by others.

Id.; see also Open Records Decision Nos. 319 at 2 (1982), 306 at 2 (1982), 255 at 2 (1980). This office must accept a claim that information subject to the Act is excepted as a trade secret if a *prima facie* case for the exception is made and no argument is submitted that rebuts the claim as a matter of law. See ORD 552 at 5. However, we cannot conclude that section 552.110(a) is applicable unless it has been shown that the information meets the definition of a trade secret and the necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish a trade secret claim. Open Records Decision No. 402 (1983).

Section 552.110(b) protects "[c]ommercial or financial information for which it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence that disclosure would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained[.]" Gov't Code § 552.110(b). This exception to disclosure requires a specific factual or evidentiary showing, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that substantial competitive injury would likely result from release of the information at issue. *Id.*; see also ORD 661.

Gamco claims that one of the submitted e-mail communications constitutes a trade secret of Gamco. However, upon review of Gamco's arguments and the information at issue, we find that Gamco has failed to demonstrate how any portion of the information at issue meets the definition of a trade secret or shown the necessary factors to establish a trade secret claim. See ORD 402 (section 552.110(a) does not apply unless information meets definition of trade secret and necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish trade secret claim). Therefore, the commission may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.110(a) of the Government Code.

Gamco also asserts that the e-mail communication at issue is confidential under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code. However, Gamco has made only conclusory allegations that release of the communication at issue would cause the company substantial competitive injury and has provided no specific factual or evidentiary showing to support such allegations. Accordingly, we determine none of the submitted information may be withheld under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code.

Section 552.137 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body" unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). *See* Gov't Code § 552.137(a), (b). The e-mail addresses at issue are not of a type specifically excluded by section 552.137(c). *See id.* § 552.137(c). You inform us that the owners of the e-mail addresses at issue have not consented to disclosure of their e-mail addresses. Therefore, the commission must withhold the e-mail addresses you have marked, as well as the additional e-mail address we have marked, under section 552.137 of the Government Code.¹

We note that some of the remaining submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Attorney General Opinion JM-672 (1987). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.* If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. *See* Open Records Decision No. 550 (1990).

In summary, the commission must withhold the marked e-mail addresses under section 552.137 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released to the requestor, but any information protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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

¹We note this office recently issued Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including an e-mail address of a member of the public under section 552.137 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

responsibilities, please visit our website at 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, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Sterner
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CDSA/egg

Ref: ID# 367954

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

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(w/o enclosures)