



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 8, 2015

Mr. Chad Timmons  
Assistant General Counsel  
University of North Texas System  
1155 Union Circle  
Denton, Texas 76203

OR2015-11236

Dear Mr. Timmons:

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# 566621 (UNT PIR No. 003111).

The University of North Texas System (the "system") received a request for a specified contract. Although the system takes no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, it states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Barnes and Noble, Inc. ("Barnes and Noble"). Accordingly, the system states, and provides documentation showing, it notified Barnes and Noble of the request for information and of its 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). We have reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>We assume 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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, we have not received comments from Barnes and Noble explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Barnes and Noble has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted 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, release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the system may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Barnes and Noble may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the submitted information must be released.

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Rustam Abedinzadeh  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RA/dls

Ref: ID# 566621

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Janine von Juergensonn  
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Barnes & Noble  
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(w/o enclosures)