



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 3, 2015

Mr. Art Provenghi
Legal Counsel
Housing Authority of the City of El Paso
P.O. Box 9895
El Paso, Texas 79995-2895

OR2015-15769

Dear Mr. Provenghi:

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# 573921.

The Housing Authority of the City of El Paso (the "authority") received a request for the proposals submitted by vendors for Request for Proposal HR 15-R-0016 and the committee evaluations, criteria, and scoring system for the proposals. You state the authority is releasing some of the requested information. We understand you have redacted a bank account number from the submitted information pursuant to section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.110 of the Government Code. We also understand you to contend release of the submitted information may implicate the interests of third parties. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the authority notified HUB International Insurance Services and Mercer (US) Inc. (collectively, the "third parties") of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments stating why their information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305 (permitting interested third party to submit to

¹Section 552.136(c) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact, without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office, the information described in section 552.136(b). Gov't Code § 552.136(c); *see also id.* § 552.136(d)-(e) (requestor may appeal governmental body's decision to withhold information under section 552.136(c) to attorney general and governmental body withholding information pursuant to section 552.136(c) must provide certain notice to requestor).

attorney general reasons why requested information should not be released); Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in certain circumstances). We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

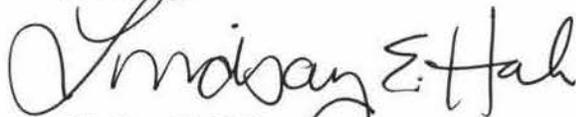
Although the authority contends the information at issue is excepted under section 552.110 of the Government Code, that exception is designed to protect the interests of third parties, not the interests of a governmental body. *See* Gov't Code § 552.110 (excepting from disclosure “[a] trade secret obtained from a person and privileged or confidential by statute or judicial decision” and “[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”). Thus, we do not address the authority’s claim under section 552.110. We note 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) of the Government Code to submit its reasons, if any, as to why requested information relating to it should be withheld from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, this office has not received comments from the third parties explaining why their information should not be released to the requestor. Thus, we have no basis to conclude the release of the submitted information would implicate the interests of the third parties, and none of the submitted information may be withheld on that basis. *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, 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), 542 at 3.

We note some of the submitted information appears to be subject to copyright law. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). 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. As no further exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the authority must release the submitted information; however, 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 responsibilities, please visit our website at 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,



Lindsay E. Hale
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LEH/dls

Ref: ID# 573921

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

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