



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 8, 2015

Mr. Zachary Noblitt  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Dallas  
1500 Marilla Street, Room 7DN  
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2015-21153

Dear Mr. Noblitt:

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# 582488.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to specified economic impact studies and for e-mail and other documents provided by a named employee to a specified company. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.107, and 552.111 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

Section 552.301 of the Government Code describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information it wishes to withhold. Gov't Code § 552.301. Pursuant to section 552.301(e) of the Government Code, a governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving a request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See id.* § 552.301(e). You inform us the city received the request for information on July 22, 2015. You do not inform us the city was closed for any additional

business days between July 22, 2015 and August 12, 2015. Accordingly, the city's fifteen-business-day deadline was August 12, 2015. However, as of the date of this letter, you have not submitted comments explaining why the stated exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the information at issue. Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless the governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). A compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake or when information is confidential under other law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). Although you claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.107 and 552.111 of the Government Code, these are discretionary exceptions that protect a governmental body's interests and may be waived. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions, governmental body may waive section 552.111), 470 at 7 (1987) (deliberative process privilege under statutory predecessor to section 552.111 subject to waiver), 676 at 10-11 676 (2002) (attorney-client privilege under Gov't Code § 552.107(1) may be waived). Thus, in failing to comply with section 552.301, the city has waived its claims under sections 552.107 and 552.111 of the Government Code. Furthermore, although you raise section 552.101 of the Government Code, which is a mandatory exception to disclosure, because you have not submitted the requested information to this office for our review, we have no basis for finding it confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code. Thus, we have no choice but to order you to release the requested information in accordance with section 552.302 of the Government Code. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 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.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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katelyn Blackburn-Rader".

Katelyn Blackburn-Rader  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KB-R/akg

Ref: ID# 582488

c: Requestor