



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 13, 2016

Mr. Thomas M. Gilliland  
Public Information Officer  
County of Harris  
1200 Baker Street  
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2016-11019

Dear Mr. Gilliland:

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# 616420 (ORR# 14SO6001188).

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for 18 categories of information related to a specified accident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, you state some of the requested information was the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2016-08895 (2016). In that ruling, we determined with the exception of the the basic information, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. You state there has been no change in the law, facts, or circumstances on which the previous ruling was based. Accordingly, to the extent the submitted information is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we conclude the sheriff's office may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-08895 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from

disclosure). To the extent the submitted information was not previously requested and ruled on by this office, we will consider your argument against its disclosure.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based upon your representation, we conclude release of the information will interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Accordingly, we find the sheriff’s office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, to the extent the requested information is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, the sheriff’s office may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-08895 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. The sheriff’s office may withhold any remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 616420

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)