



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 18, 2015

Ms. Destinee Waiters
General Counsel
Texas Woman's University
P.O. Box 425497
Denton, Texas 76204-5497

OR2015-19525

Dear Ms. Waiters:

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# 580240.

Texas Woman's University (the "university") received a request for information pertaining to two specified requests for proposals. You state the submitted information may be excepted from disclosure under section 552.153 of the Government Code, but take no position with respect to the applicability of this exception. Rather, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Freeman Audio Visual, Inc. ("Freeman"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Freeman 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.¹ *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

¹You acknowledge, and we agree, the university did not comply with the requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nevertheless, third-party interests can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness caused by a failure to comply with section 552.301. *See id.* §§ 552.007, .302. Thus, we will consider whether the submitted information must be withheld under the Act on those grounds.

of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

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 Freeman explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Freeman 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 university may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Freeman 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, 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,



Cristian Rosas-Grillet
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CRG/cbz

²We assume that 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 that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Ref: ID# 580240

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)