



November 20, 2015

Ms. Claudene Marshall  
Assistant General Counsel  
Office of General Counsel  
Texas A&M University System  
301 Tarrow Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
College Station, Texas 77840-7896

OR2015-24426

Dear Ms. Marshall:

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# 588087 (TAMU No. 15-744).

Texas A&M University (the "university") received a request for of a copy of the winning proposal for a specified bid number. Although the university 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 Aegis Sciences Corporation ("Aegis"). Accordingly, the university states, and provides documentation showing, it notified Aegis 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 information.

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 Aegis explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no

basis to conclude Aegis 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 Aegis may have in the information.

Section 552.136 of the Government Code provides, “[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential.”<sup>1</sup> Gov’t Code § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining “access device”). This office has determined insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. Upon review, we find the university must withhold the submitted insurance policy numbers under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

We note some of the remaining information may be protected by copyright. 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.

In summary, the university must withhold the submitted insurance policy numbers under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The university must release the remaining information; however, the university may release information subject to copyright only 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/>

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<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision No. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

[ori\\_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,



Lee Seidlits  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CLS/som

Ref: ID# 588087

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Michael Colello  
Aegis Sciences Corporation  
515 Great Circle Road  
Nashville, Tennessee 37228  
(w/o enclosures)