



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 5, 2016

Mr. Mark G. Daniel  
Counsel for City of Watauga  
Evans, Daniel, Moore, Evans & Lazarus  
115 West Second Street, Suite 202  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2016-15239

Dear Mr. Daniel:

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# 619351 (ORR# 16-51).

The City of Watauga (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for the name and address for every residential account where water was disconnected during a specified time period and is still disconnected. You state the city has released some of the requested information. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by section 182.052 of the Utilities Code, which provides in relevant part the following:

- (a) Except as provided by Section 182.054, a government-operated utility may not disclose personal information in a customer's account record, or any information relating to the volume or units of utility usage or the amounts billed to or collected from the individual for utility usage, if the customer requests that the government-operated utility keep the information confidential. However, a government-operated utility may disclose

information related to the customer's volume or units of utility usage or amounts billed to or collected from the individual for utility usage if the primary source of water for such utility was a sole-source designated aquifer.

(b) A customer may request confidentiality by delivering to the government-operated utility an appropriately marked form provided under Subsection (c)(3) or any other written request for confidentiality.

Util. Code § 182.052(a)-(b). "Personal information" under section 182.052(a) means an individual's address, telephone number, or social security number, but does not include an individual's name. *See id.* § 182.051(4); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 625 (1994) (construing statutory predecessor). The scope of utility services covered by section 182.052 includes water. Util. Code § 182.051(3).

You state the portions of the submitted information you have marked consist of the personal information of residential utility customers who timely requested confidentiality under section 182.052. You do not indicate any of the exceptions to confidentiality under section 182.054 apply in this instance. You state the primary source of water for the city's utility services is not a sole-source designated aquifer. Based on your representations and our review of the submitted information, we find the city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 182.052 of the Utilities Code. *See* ORD 625 at 7 (character of requested information as public or not public must be determined at time request for information is made).

Some of the remaining information is subject to section 552.136 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> Section 552.136 provides, "Notwithstanding 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." Gov't Code § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining "access device"). Accordingly, the city must withhold the account numbers we have marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

In summary, the city must withhold the personal information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 182.052 of the Utilities Code. The city must withhold the account numbers we marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining information.

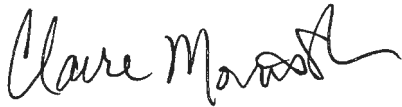
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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 black ink, appearing to read "Claire V. Morris Sloan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" being the most prominent.

Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/eb

Ref: ID# 619351

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)