



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 22, 2016

Ms. Stacie S. White
Counsel for City of Haltom City
Taylor Olson Adkins Sralla Elam
6000 Western Place, Suite 200
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

OR2016-26026

Dear Ms. White:

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# 635178.

The City of Haltom City (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for (1) the number of officers working for the city's police department during a specified time, (2) the rank of certain city police officers employed during a specified time, and (3) information pertaining to discrimination complaints filed by city employees. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.103 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part:

- (a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents sufficient to establish the applicability of section 552.103 to the information it seeks to withhold. To meet this burden, the governmental body must demonstrate: (1) litigation was pending or reasonably anticipated on the date of its receipt of the request for information and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *See Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, orig. proceeding); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.). Both elements of the test must be met in order for information to be excepted from disclosure under section 552.103. *See Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990).*

Whether litigation is reasonably anticipated must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See Open Records Decision No. 452 at 4 (1986).* To demonstrate litigation is reasonably anticipated, the governmental body must furnish concrete evidence that litigation involving a specific matter is realistically contemplated and is more than mere conjecture. *Id.* This office has found a pending complaint with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (“EEOC”) indicates litigation is reasonably anticipated. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 386 at 2 (1983), 336 at 1 (1982), 281 at 1 (1981).*

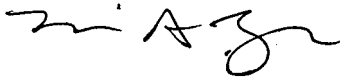
You state prior to the city's receipt of the instant request, the requestor filed discrimination claims against the city with the EEOC. Based on your arguments and our review of the information at issue, we find the city reasonably anticipated litigation on the date this request was received. You also state the submitted information pertains to the substance of the discrimination claims. Based on your representations and our review, we find the information at issue is related to the anticipated litigation. Therefore, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.

Generally, however, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982).* Thus, information that has either been obtained from or provided to all parties to the anticipated litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a) and must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded. *See Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); see also Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).*

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,



Nicholas A. Ybarra
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NAY/akg

Ref: ID# 635178

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)