



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 13, 2017

Mr. Stephen D. Gates
First Assistant City Attorney
City of Midland
P.O. Box 1152
Midland, Texas 79701

OR2017-03219

Dear Mr. Gates:

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# 645512 (Midland ID #M019486-112216).

The Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to the arrest of a named individual from a specified time period. You state the department has released some information to the requestor. 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.

Initially, we note some of the submitted information is not responsive to the instant request because it was created after the date the department received the request. The Act does not require a governmental body to disclose information that did not exist at the time the request was received. This ruling does not address the public availability of the non-responsive information, which we have marked, and the department need not release it in response to this request.

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. Section 552.101 of the Government Code encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. You state the submitted information contains information that was reported to the National Trace Center of the Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol,

Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (the "ATF"). Public Law number 112-55 states, in pertinent part,

[D]uring the current fiscal year and in each fiscal year thereafter, no funds appropriated under [the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012] or any other [a]ct may be used to disclose part or all of the contents of the Firearms Trace System database maintained by the National Trace Center of the [ATF] or any information required to be kept by licensees pursuant to section 923(g) of title 18, United States Code, or required to be reported pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (7) of such section, except to: (1) a Federal, State, local, or tribal law enforcement agency, or a Federal, State, or local prosecutor . . . unless such disclosure of such data to an[] . . . entit[y] described in (1) . . . of this proviso would compromise the identity of any undercover law enforcement officer or confidential informant, or interfere with any case under investigation; and no person or entity described in (1) . . . shall knowingly and publicly disclose such data; and all such data shall be immune from legal process, shall not be subject to subpoena or other discovery, shall be inadmissible in evidence, and shall not be used, relied on, or disclosed in any manner, nor shall testimony or other evidence be permitted based on the data, in a civil action in any State[.]

Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-55, 125 Stat. 552, 609-10 (2011). You state the submitted information contains Firearms Trace Summaries, which consist of content from the Firearms Trace System database maintained by the National Trace Center. Upon review, we find the submitted Firearms Trace Summaries at issue are confidential under Public Law number 112-55. *See Miller v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 562 F. Supp. 2d 82, 111 (D.D.C. 2008) (holding Firearms Trace Report properly withheld under Freedom of Information Act exemption 3, which covers records that are exempt from disclosure by statute). Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Public Law number 112-55. The department must release the remaining responsive information.¹

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.

¹We note the requestor has a right of access to some of the information being released in this instance. *See Gov't Code § 552.023(a)* (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates or person's agent on ground that information is considered confidential by privacy principles); *Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987)* (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). Thus, if the department receives another request for the same information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a decision from this office.

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,



Kieran Hillis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/sb

Ref: ID# 645512

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)