



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 10, 2017

Ms. Michele Freeland  
Legal Assistant  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2017-10066

Dear Ms. Freeland:

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# 657228 (PIR# 17-1258).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified project. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, the department indicates release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of QA Construction Services, Inc. and SS Roofing & Construction. Accordingly, the department provides documentation showing it notified the third parties of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue 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 considered the exception the department claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (Tex. 2015). The department represents the information pertains to a competitive bidding situation. In addition, the department states "[t]he

submitted information consists of a bid tab for roof replacement and access ladder.” The department further states “release of the requested information would harm [the department]’s purchasing interests and weaken the [d]epartment’s bargaining position as it deliberates options and negotiates best value now and in the future. If the requested information is released, competing vendors would know the prices offered by an entity selling these goods or services to the [d]epartment, which could artificially inflate prices and prevent the [d]epartment from getting best value[.]” After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find the department has established the release of the information at issue would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.

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](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,



Rahat Huq  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSH/sb

Ref: ID# 657228

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

2 Third Parties  
(w/o enclosures)