



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 9, 2017

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

OR2017-18008

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# 669905 (DPS PIR#17-3621).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for the bid tabulations pertaining to requisition number 405-17-B02870. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, the department indicates release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Bullchase, Inc., HD Supply White Cap Construction, and Mavich, LLC. 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 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 considered the exception you claim 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 at

issue pertains to a competitive bidding situation. In addition, the department states release of the information would harm its purchasing interests and weaken its bargaining position as it deliberates options and negotiates best values now and in the future. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find the department has established the release of the information 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.

The department also asks this office to issue a previous determination that would permit it to withhold information under section 552.104 of the Government Code without requesting a ruling from this office. Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001). We decline to issue such a previous determination at this time. Accordingly, 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,

  
Jennifer Copeland  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JC/sb

Ref: ID# 669905

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

3 Third Parties  
(w/o enclosures)