



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 11, 2017

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

OR2017-18316

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# 670962 (PIR Nos. 17-3752, 17-4033, and 17-4628).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received three requests for the bid tabulation on a specified project. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, the department states the release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Bullchase, Inc., Dealers Electric Supply, Elliott Electric Supply Store, Facility Solutions Group, Inc., Hill Country Electric Supply LP, Mat-erial Val-ues, LLC, and Moreno Supply Inc. Accordingly, the department provides documentation showing it notified the third parties of the requests for information and of their rights 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.

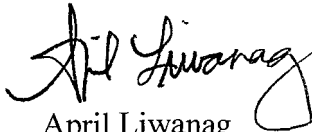
Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831, 841 (Tex. 2015). You state the submitted information consists of a bid tabulation for products and services purchased for the department. You

claim the release of the submitted information would harm the department's purchasing interests and weaken the department's bargaining position as it deliberates its options and negotiates best value now and in the future. Further, you state if the submitted information is released, competing vendors would know the prices offered by an entity selling these goods or services to the department, which could artificially inflate prices and prevent the department from getting best value. Based on your representations and our review, we find the department has established the release of the submitted 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.

Finally, you request that this office issue a previous determination that would permit the department to withhold from disclosure bid tabulations under section 552.104 of the Government Code without the need of requesting a ruling from this office. 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, 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,



April Liwanag
Attorney
Open Records Division

AML/eb

Ref: ID# 670962

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)

7 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)