



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 18, 2017

Ms. Katheryne Ellison
Assistant General Counsel
Houston Independent School District
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, Texas 77092-8501

OR2017-23872

Dear Ms. Ellison:

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# 680252 (File No. Francis F080117).

The Houston Independent School District (the "district") received a request for bid tabulations pertaining to a specified request for proposals for fencing services. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Dow Pipe & Fence Supply Company, The Fierro Group Ltd. d/b/a Fencemaster of Houston, National Fence Company, and Westco Ventures, LLC. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified these third parties of the request for information and of their rights 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 reviewed the submitted information.

We note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) of the Government Code to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B).* As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from any of the third parties explaining why the submitted information

should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude these third parties have a protected proprietary interest in the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the district may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest these third parties may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the district must release the submitted information.

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,



Matthew Taylor
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHT/tdw

Ref: ID# 680252

c: Requestor

4 Third Parties