



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 5, 2017

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

OR2017-27605

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# 686203 (PIR# 17-6802).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for a specified bid tabulation. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Further, you indicate release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Adventure Outdoors Supply, L.L.C.; Bereli, Inc.; Botach, Inc.; Con10gency Consulting, L.L.C. ("Con10gency"); GT Distributors, Inc.; and Kel-Lac Uniforms. Accordingly, you indicate you notified these third parties of the requests 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 received comments from Con10gency. We have considered the submitted arguments 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). You represent the submitted information pertains to a competitive bidding situation. In addition, you state release of the information at issue could "artificially inflate prices and prevent the [d]epartment from getting [the] best value[.]" You argue if the information at issue 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. 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).<sup>1</sup>

The department also asks this office to issue a previous determination that would permit it to withhold bid tabulations 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,



Ramsey A. Abarca  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RAA/gw

Ref: ID# 686203

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

c: 6 Third Parties  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining argument against disclosure of this information.