



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 23, 2018

Ms. Julie A. Masek
Assistant General Counsel
The Texas A&M University System
301 Tarrow Street, 6th Floor
College Station, Texas 77840-7896

OR2018-01455

Dear Ms. Masek:

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# 692849 (R002067-102717).

West Texas A&M University (the "university") received a request for a specified agreement. Although the university takes no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state its release may implicate the proprietary interests of Pepsi Beverages Company ("Pepsi"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, the university notified Pepsi of the request and its right to submit arguments to this office. *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.

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 ruling, we have not received comments from Pepsi explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Pepsi has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b); 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 university may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Pepsi may have in the information. As no other exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the university 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,



James M. Graham
Attorney
Open Records Division

JMG/eb

Ref: ID# 692849

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)