



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 24, 2019

Mr. Lonnie Hunt
Executive Director
Deep East Texas Council of Governments &
Economic Development District
210 Premier Drive
Jasper, Texas 75951

OR2019-02195

Dear Mr. Hunt:

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# 747614.

The Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Economic Development District ("DETCOG") received a request for information pertaining to a specified request for proposals. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. You also state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Connected Nation; Ericsson/InCode; Foresite Group; Last Mile Communication; and Magellan. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified the third parties of the request 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 representative sample of information.¹

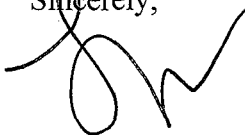
¹We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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. You inform us “the negotiations are ongoing and no final agreement has been reached.” Thus, you state release of the submitted information would disadvantage DETCOG and hinder DETCOG’s ability to negotiate. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find you have established the release of the information would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude DETCOG may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.

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,



Jahanna Ward
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JW/gw

Ref: ID# 747614

c: Requestor

c: 5 Third Parties