



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 25, 2019

Mr. Matthew Murray  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, Third Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2019-05165

Dear Mr. Murray:

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# 751751 (City ID# W078981).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for the bid tabulation pertaining to a specified invitation to bid. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Evans Industries, Integrated Power Services ("IPS"), and Shermco Industries, Inc. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified the third parties of the request 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 IPS. We have reviewed the submitted information and considered the submitted arguments.

Initially, 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) 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 the remaining third parties explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude the remaining third parties have a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *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 city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the remaining third parties may have in the 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). A private third party may invoke this exception. *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (Tex. 2015). 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.” *Id.* at 841. IPS states it has competitors. In addition, IPS states release of the information at issue would “give an advantage to its competitor . . . by enabling those competitors to craft future bids in a way designed to undermine or beat IPS’s bid.” After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find IPS has established the release of the information at issue would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the city may withhold the information we marked under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining 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](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,



Meagan J. Conway  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MC/mo

Ref: ID# 751751

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)