



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 13, 2019

Mr. Trey Qualls  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2019-06942

Dear Mr. Qualls:

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# 754384 (City PIR No. W079604).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for fourteen categories of information related to a specified automotive accident. You state you have released some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. We note the submitted information consists of a recording from a police officer's body worn camera. Body worn cameras are subject to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Section 1701.661(a) of the Occupations Code provides:

A member of the public is required to provide the following information when submitting a written request to a law enforcement agency for information recorded by a body worn camera:

- (1) the date and approximate time of the recording;

- (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and
- (3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

Occ. Code § 1701.661(a). We note the requestor provided the information required by section 1701.661(a) of the Occupations Code for release of the body worn camera recording at issue. The submitted recording reflects it was required to be made by law or the policies of the department and relates to a law enforcement purpose. *See id.* § 1701.661(h). We understand the recording at issue is or could be used as evidence in a criminal prosecution. *See id.* § 1701.661(d) (stating information “that is or could be used as evidence in a criminal prosecution is subject to the requirements of [the Act.]”). Additionally, we have no indication the recording at issue documents an incident that involves the use of deadly force by an officer or relates to an administrative or criminal investigation of an officer. *See id.* § 1701.660(a). The recording at issue demonstrates it was not made in a private space for the purposes of section 1701.661(f). *See id.* §§ 1701.661(f), .651(3) (defining “private space” for purposes of section 1701.661(f)). We note, however, section 1701.661(f) provides, in relevant part:

A law enforcement agency may not release any portion . . . of a recording involving the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and does not result in arrest, without written authorization from the person who is the subject of that portion of the recording or, if the person is deceased, from the person’s authorized representative.

*Id.* § 1701.661(f). You state the submitted recording pertains to the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and which did not result in an arrest. You state you have not received a written authorization for release from the subjects of the recording. *See id.* Accordingly, we find the department must withhold the submitted body worn camera recording in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations Code.

You also ask this office to issue a previous determination permitting the department to withhold body worn camera recordings involving the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and that does not result in arrest and that are without written authorization from all subjects of the recordings under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations Code without seeking a ruling from this office. *See Gov’t Code* § 552.301(a) (allowing governmental body to withhold information subject to previous determination); Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (listing elements of second type of previous determination under section 552.301(a) of the Government Code). We decline to issue such a ruling 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Neal', written in a cursive style.

Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/jxd

Ref: ID# 754384

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)