



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 30, 2019

Mr. Matthew Grove
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County
401 Jackson Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2019-11373

Dear Mr. Grove:

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# 768672.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (the “sheriff’s office”) received a request for a specified incident report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.152 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on your representation and our review, we find release of the submitted information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536

S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; see also Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). We note basic information includes, among other items, the names of arresting and investigating officers. See *id.* at 3-4. Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, the sheriff’s office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

You seek to withhold some of the basic information under section 552.152 of the Government Code, which provides:

Information in the custody of a governmental body that relates to an employee or officer of the governmental body is excepted from [required public disclosure] if, under the specific circumstances pertaining to the employee or officer, disclosure of the information would subject the employee or officer to a substantial threat of physical harm.

Gov’t Code § 552.152. You seek to withhold the identities of an undercover police officer. You state release of this information would subject the officer to a substantial threat of physical harm. Based on your representations and our review, we find you have demonstrated the release of the information at issue would subject the officer at issue to a substantial threat of physical harm. Accordingly, in releasing basic information, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information you marked under section 552.152 of the Government Code.

In summary, with the exception of basic information, the sheriff’s office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing basic information, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information you marked under section 552.152 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meagan J. Conway', written in a cursive style.

Meagan J. Conway
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MC/eb

Ref: ID# 768672

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)