



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 4, 2019

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar, 6Floor 6W
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2019-14697

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

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# 775327 (ORR# D009324-040119).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim some of the requested information is subject to a previous ruling. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, you state some of the requested information was the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2019-10143 (2019). We have no indication there has been any change in the law, facts, or circumstances on which the previous ruling was based. Accordingly, we conclude the department may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2019-10143 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

Initially, we note, and you acknowledge, the department has not complied with the time periods prescribed by section 552.301 of the Government Code in seeking an open records decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301. Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ). The need of a governmental body, other than the governmental body that failed to timely seek an open records decision, to withhold information under section 552.108 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason sufficient to overcome the presumption of openness. *See* Open Records Decision No. 586 (1991). Because you inform us, and provide documentation showing, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") objects to the release of the information at issue, we will consider whether the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108 of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office.

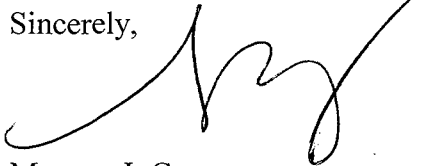
Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution 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). The department states, and provides a statement demonstrating, the district attorney's office has advised the department the information at issue is related to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. The district attorney's office states it objects to disclosure of the information at issue because its release would interfere with the investigation or prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue 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, the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office.

In summary, the department may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2019-10143 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. The department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office.

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,



Meagan J. Conway
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MC/mo

Ref: ID# 775327

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)