



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 12, 2019

Ms. Cecilia M. Alvarez
Assistant General Counsel
University of Houston System
4302 University Drive, Room 311
Houston, Texas 77204-2028

OR2019-22169

Dear Ms. Alvarez:

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# 779896.

The University of Houston (the "university") received a request for information pertaining to a specified university contract.¹ Although the university takes no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, the university states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Paciolan LLC ("Paciolan"). Accordingly, the university states, and provides documentation showing, it notified Paciolan of the request for information and of the 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 reviewed the submitted information.

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

¹ We note the university sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222 (providing if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-business-day period to request attorney general opinion is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See id.* § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from Paciolan explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Paciolan has 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 university may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Paciolan may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the university must release the submitted 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



D. Michelle Case
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DMC/jxd

Ref: ID# 779896

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)