



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 16, 2019

Ms. Andrea Slater Gulley
General Counsel
Amarillo Independent School District
7200 I-40 West
Amarillo, Texas 79106

OR2019-22818

Dear Ms. Gulley:

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# 781890 (ORR# 3565).

The Amarillo Independent School District (the "district") received a request for the bid tabulation pertaining to a specified project. The district does not take a position as to whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act. However, the district states, and provides documentation showing, it notified the following third parties of the district's receipt of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released: 1st Choice Restaurant Equipment; A-Texas Restaurant Supply; Douglas Equipment; Johnson-Lancaster & Associates Inc.; Kitchen Resources; Mission Restaurant Supply; Oswalt Restaurant Supply ("Oswalt"); Pasco; and TREX. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 at 3 (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 Oswalt objecting to the release of some of the information at issue. We have considered the submitted arguments and 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 why requested information relating to it should be withheld from disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, none of the remaining third parties has submitted to this office any reasons explaining why the requested information should not be released. Accordingly, we have no basis for concluding the submitted information constitutes proprietary information of these third parties, and the district may not withhold

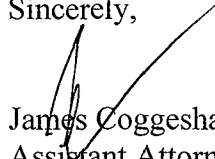
any portion of it on that basis. See Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code exempts 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, 841 (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.* Oswalt states it has competitors and argues release of its information would cause it substantial competitive harm. Upon review, we find Oswalt has established the release of the information at issue would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the district may withhold Oswalt’s information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code. The district 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 <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,



James Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/mo

Ref: ID# 781890

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

9 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)