



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 21, 2019

Ms. Laura Cedillo
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P. O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283

OR2019-23213

Dear Ms. Cedillo:

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# 781616 (Ref. No. W267436-053119).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to twenty-four specified requests for proposals. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Cintas Corporation ("Cintas"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Cintas of the request for information and of its 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 received comments from Cintas. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you have only submitted information pertaining to one of the specified requests for proposals. To the extent any additional information responsive to the request existed on the date the city received the request, we assume the city has released it. If the city has not released any such information, it must do so at this time. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; see also Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body

concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder.” Gov’t Code § 552.104(a). In considering whether a private third party may assert this exception, the supreme court reasoned because section 552.305(a) of the Government Code includes section 552.104 as an example of an exception that involves a third party’s property interest, a private third party may invoke this exception. *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (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.* at 841. Cintas states it has competitors. In addition, Cintas states the release of its information at issue would give competitors an advantage. Cintas seeks to withhold its pricing information. For many years, this office concluded the terms of a contract and especially the pricing of a winning bidder are public and generally not excepted from disclosure. Gov’t Code § 552.022(a)(3) (contract involving receipt or expenditure of public funds expressly made public); Open Records Decision Nos. 541 at 8 (1990) (public has interest in knowing terms of contract with state agency), 514 (1988) (public has interest in knowing prices charged by government contractors), 494 (1988) (requiring balancing of public interest in disclosure with competitive injury to company). *See generally* Freedom of Information Act Guide & Privacy Act Overview, 219 (2000) (federal cases applying analogous Freedom of Information Act reasoning that disclosure of prices charged government is a cost of doing business with government). However, now, pursuant to *Boeing*, section 552.104 is not limited to only ongoing competitive situations, and a third party need only show release of its competitively sensitive information would give an advantage to a competitor even after a contract is executed. *Boeing*, 466 S.W.3d 831, at 831, 842. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find Cintas has established the release of its pricing information would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the city may withhold Cintas’s pricing information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.¹ The city 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.

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

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,



Matthew Taylor
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHT/jxd

Ref: ID# 781616

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

