



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 4, 2019

Ms. Kirsty Dymond
Assistant General Counsel
Stephen F. Austin State University
P. O. Box 13065, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-3065

OR2019-24619

Dear Ms. Dymond:

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# 783789.

Stephen F. Austin State University (the "university") received a request for contract agreements between the university and other institutions or event planners. 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 bdG Sports, L.L.C.¹ Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified this third party 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 reviewed the submitted information.

We note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating

¹ We note the university did not comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nonetheless, third party interests can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness caused by failure to comply with section 552.301. *See id.* § 552.302; Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Because third party interests are at stake in this instance, we will consider whether the information at issue must be withheld under the Act.

to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received any comments from the third party explaining why any of the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude the third party has protected proprietary interests in the 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. Consequently, the university may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests the third party may have in the information. As no exceptions are raised, the submitted information must be released.

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,



Britni Ramirez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BR/jxd

Ref: ID# 783789

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)