



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 2, 2019

Mr. Thomas L. McMillian
Assistant City Attorney
City of Amarillo
200 Southeast Third Avenue, 4th Floor
Amarillo, Texas 79101-1514

OR2019-27634

Dear Mr. McMillian:

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# 789041 (PIR No. 19-1700).

The Amarillo Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a named chemical. Although the department takes no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, the department states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Defense Technology. Accordingly, the department states, and provides documentation showing, it notified the third party 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 why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from the third party explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude the third party 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 department may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the third party may have in the information.

We note some of the information at issue may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted information unless an exception applies to the information. *Id*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of the copyrighted information, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. Accordingly, the department must release the remaining information; however, any information that is subject to copyright may be released only in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Pearlie Gault
Attorney
Open Records Division

PG/eb

Ref: ID# 789041

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)