



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 19, 2019

Mr. Blake C. Billings  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Tech University System  
P.O. Box 42021  
Lubbock, Texas 79409-2021

OR2019-36023

Dear Mr. Billings:

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# 801599.

Texas Tech University (the "university") received a request for certain contracts and agreements between the university and Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC ("CNS") during a stated period of time.<sup>1</sup> Although you take no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of the information at issue may implicate the proprietary interests of CNS. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the university notified CNS 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.

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<sup>1</sup> You state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the university sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (stating if information requested is unclear to governmental body or if large amount of information has been requested, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify or narrow request, but may not inquire into purpose for which information will be used); *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380 (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).

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 CNS explaining why the information at issue should not be released. Thus, we have no basis to conclude CNS has a protected proprietary interest in the information at issue. *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. Therefore, the university may not withhold any portion of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest CNS may have in it. 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,



Blake Brennan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

BBX/jxd

Ref: ID# 801599

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor

c: Third Party