



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 3, 2020

Ms. Traci Henderson
Assistant City Secretary
City of North Richland Hills
P. O. Box 820609
North Richland Hills, Texas 76182-0609

OR2020-03134

Dear Ms. Henderson:

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# 809501 (PIR No. W002801).

The City of North Richland Hills (the "city") received a request for information related to certain contracts and invoices regarding copier and printer equipment. You state the city released some of the requested information. The city claims some of the submitted information is subject to copyright law. Although you take no position as to whether the remaining submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the remaining submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Ricoh USA, Inc. ("Ricoh"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Ricoh 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 considered your argument and 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 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 Ricoh explaining why any of the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Ricoh 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 city may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests Ricoh may have in the information.

You contend the remaining information 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 materials 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 copyrighted materials, 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. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the submitted information must be released, but any information protected by copyright may only be released 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,



Britni Ramirez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BR/jxd

Ref: ID# 809501

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)