



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 11, 2020

Mr. Joseph Behnke
Assistant General Counsel
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2020-07637

Dear Mr. Behnke:

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# 816237 (OOG# 521-19).

The Office of the Governor (the "governor's office") received a request for a specified event application. The governor's office states it will redact information pursuant to section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.¹ Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Harris County Houston Sports Authority ("HCHSA"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified HCHSA of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue 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

¹ Section 552.136(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.136(b) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See id.* § 552.136(c).

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 HCHSA explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude HCHSA 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 governor's office may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest HCHSA may have in the information. The governor's office 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,



Kelly McWethy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KM/jxd

Ref: ID# 816237

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)