



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 30, 2020

Mr. W. Montgomery Meitler
Senior Counsel
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

OR2020-09669

Dear Mr. Meitler:

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# 823439 (PIR# 41133).

The Texas Education Agency (the "TEA") received a request for all bids submitted in response to a specified request for proposals during a specified time period, excluding the bid of the requestor's company. Although the TEA takes no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, the TEA informs us its release may implicate the proprietary interests of SHI Government Solutions ("SHI") and Web-Hed Technologies, Inc., d/b/a Webhead ("Webhead"). Accordingly, the TEA states, and provides documentation showing, it notified these third parties of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments to this office. *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) of the Government Code 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 SHI and Webhead explaining why the information at issue should not be released. Thus, we have no basis to conclude SHI and Webhead have

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, 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 TEA may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest SHI and Webhead may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure are raised, the TEA 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,

James M. Graham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JMG/mo

Ref: ID# 823439

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

cc: 2 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)