



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 22, 2020

Mr. Vito Chavana
Assistant District Attorney
Hidalgo County
100 East Cano Street
Edinburg, Texas 78539

OR2020-16353

Dear Mr. Chavana:

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# 832816 (Ref. No. 2020-0069-DA.CO).

Hidalgo County (the "county") received a request for information pertaining to a specified request for bids. The county claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, the county states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of AM Utilities and Construction, L.L.C.; FLIR Detection, Inc. ("FLIR"); and Reconview. Accordingly, the county states, and provides documentation showing, it notified the third parties of the request for information and of their 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 received comments from FLIR. We have reviewed the submitted information and considered the submitted arguments.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that a governmental body demonstrates, if released, would "harm its interests by providing an advantage to a competitor or bidder in a particular ongoing competitive situation or in a particular competitive situation where the governmental body establishes the situation at issue is set to reoccur or there is a specific and demonstrable intent to enter into the competitive situation again in the future." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*,

466 S.W.3d 831, 841 (Tex. 2015). After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find the county has established the release of the information at issue would harm its interests by providing an advantage to a competitor or bidder in a particular ongoing competitive situation. Thus, we conclude the county may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.¹

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,

Alexandra C. Burks
Attorney
Open Records Division

ACB/jxd

Ref: ID# 832816

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

3 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.