



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 8, 2020

Ms. Mary Dougherty
Open Records Attorney
Texas Department of Insurance
P.O. Box 149104
Austin, Texas 78714

OR2020-17035

Dear Ms. Dougherty:

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# 835076 (TDI# R007944).

The Texas Department of Insurance (the "department") received a request for the protection class code pertaining to a specified address. Although the department takes no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, the department states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Insurances Services Office (ISO), Inc. ("ISO"). Accordingly, the department states it notified ISO 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 received comments from ISO. We have reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the requestor seeks only the specified protection class code. The department has submitted documents that contain information beyond this specific piece of information. Thus, the portions of the submitted documents that do not consist of the information requested are not responsive to the present request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request and the department is not required to release that information in response to the request.

Section 552.110(c) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "commercial or financial information for which it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence that

disclosure would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.110(c). ISO argues the information at issue consists of commercial or financial information subject to section 552.110(c), the release of which would cause substantial competitive harm to ISO. Upon review, we find ISO has demonstrated the information at issue constitutes commercial or financial information, the release of which would cause substantial competitive harm. Accordingly, the department must withhold the responsive information under section 552.110(c) 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,

Matthew Taylor
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MT/be

Ref: ID# 835076

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

1 Third Party
(w/o enclosures)

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining argument against disclosure of the information at issue.