



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 17, 2020

Ms. Raika Rowe
Public Information Coordinator
Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
P.O. Box 13127
Austin, Texas 78711-3127

OR2020-17908

Dear Ms. Rowe:

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# 836102 (TABC Records Request R002598-042720).

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (the "commission") received a request for all records related to a specified business during a specified time period. You state you will release some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). By its terms, section 552.108 applies only to a law enforcement agency or a prosecutor. We note the commission's Enforcement Division is a law enforcement agency. *See Alco. Bev. Code* §§ 5.14 (commission may commission inspectors with police powers to enforce Alcoholic Beverage Code), .36 (commission shall investigate violations of Alcoholic Beverage Code and other laws relating to alcoholic beverages), .361 (commission shall develop risk-based approach to enforcement). You state Exhibit B pertains to a pending criminal investigation by the commission's Enforcement Division. Based upon this representation and our review, we conclude release of Exhibit B would interfere with the detection, investigation,

or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to Exhibit B.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. *See Gov't Code* § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(2), .301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). By its terms, section 552.108 applies only to a law enforcement agency or a prosecutor. As noted above, the commission's Enforcement Division is a law enforcement agency. *See Alco. Bev. Code* §§ 5.14, .36, .361. You state Exhibit C pertains to closed criminal investigations of the commission's Enforcement Division that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based upon this representation and our review, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to Exhibit C.

However, we note, and you acknowledge, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Gov't Code* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, which you state you will release, the commission may withhold Exhibit B under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code and Exhibit C under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

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,

Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/mo

Ref: ID# 836102

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)