



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 5, 2020

Mr. Jeffrey W. Giles
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2020-27851

Dear Mr. Giles:

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# 852741 (GC No. 26909).

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for the bid tabulations regarding a specified solicitation. Although the city takes no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, the city informs us its release may implicate the proprietary interests of the following third parties: ASPEN Refrigerants, Inc.; Environmental Sorbents, LLC; Ferullo Construction & Supplies, Co.; Forrest Industrial Group, LLC; PKJ International, LLC; The Fixts Group, LLC; and United Refrigeration, Inc. Accordingly, the city 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 any interested third party explaining why the information at issue should not be released. Thus, we have no basis to conclude any of the interested

third parties have a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See, e.g., id.* § 552.110 (requiring the provision of specific factual evidence demonstrating the applicability of the exception). Therefore, the city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest any interested third party may have in the information. Accordingly, the city 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/be

Ref: ID# 852741

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

cc: 7 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)