



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 15, 2020

Ms. Stacey Cormican
Attorney
CPS Energy
145 Navarro
San Antonio, Texas 78205

OR2020-31278

Dear Ms. Cormican:

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# 857158.

The City Public Service Board of San Antonio ("CPS Energy") received a request for specified information pertaining to the awarding of a specified project. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.133 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of CCC Group, Inc. ("CCC"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified CCC of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue 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 considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note 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 CCC explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude CCC has 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). Accordingly, CPS Energy may not withhold any portion of the submitted information related to CCC on the basis of any proprietary interest it may have in the information.

Section 552.133 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a public power utility's information that is "reasonably related to a competitive matter." *Id.* § 552.133(b). Section 552.133 provides, in relevant part the following:

(a) In this section, "public power utility" means an entity providing electric or gas utility services that is subject to the provisions of this chapter.

(a-1) For purposes of this section, "competitive matter" means a utility related matter that is related to the public power utility's competitive activity, including commercial information, and would, if disclosed, give advantage to competitors or prospective competitors. The term:

(1) means a matter that is reasonably related to the following categories of information:

...

(E) plans, studies, proposals, and analyses for system improvements, additions, or sales, other than transmission and distribution system improvements inside the service area for which the public power utility is the sole certificated retail provider[.]

Id. § 552.133(a)-(a-1)(1)(E). We note section 552.133(a-1)(2) provides fifteen categories of information that are not competitive matters. *See id.* § 552.133(a-1)(2). We understand CPS Energy is a municipally-owned utility. Thus, CPS Energy is a public power entity for purposes of section 552.133. Upon review, we find CPS Energy has failed to demonstrate the information at issue relates to a competitive matter as defined by section 552.133(a-1). *See id.* § 552.133(a-1)(1)(A)-(F). Therefore, we conclude CPS Energy may not withhold any portion of the submitted information under section 552.133 of the Government Code. As no further arguments against disclosure have been raised, CPS Energy 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,

Ashley Crutchfield
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

AC/rm

Ref: ID# 857158

c: Requestor

Third Party