



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 17, 2020

Ms. Stacey Cormican
Attorney, Legal Services Division
CPS Energy
P.O. Box 1771
San Antonio, Texas 78296-1771

OR2020-32006

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# 858532.

The City Public Service Board of San Antonio d/b/a CPS Energy ("CPS Energy") received a request for award information pertaining to a specified solicitation. CPS Energy claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, CPS Energy states release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of KBS Electrical Distributors, Inc. ("KBS"). Accordingly, CPS Energy states, and provides documentation showing, it notified KBS of the request for information and of the 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 considered the exception CPS Energy claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, 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) 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 KBS explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude KBS 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 the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest KBS may have in the information.

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.” *Id.* § 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 CPS Energy has failed to demonstrate the applicability of section 552.104 to the information at issue. Thus, we conclude CPS Energy may not withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code. As no further exceptions to 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,

Michelle Garza
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MRG/be

Ref: ID# 858532

c: Requestor

Third Party