



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 22, 2020

Ms. D'Ann Lacey Bey
Office of General Counsel
Garland Independent School District
P.O. Box 469026
Garland, Texas 75046-4923

OR2020-32123

Dear Ms. Bey:

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# 859731.

The Garland Independent School District (the "district") received a request for certain information pertaining to a specified request for proposals. You state you will release some information to the requestor. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Applications Software Technology; Dex Imaging, L.L.C.; DocuNav Solutions ("DocuNav"); Softdocs, Inc. ("Softdocs"); and Technology Services Group, Inc. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation demonstrating, you notified these third parties 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 received comments from DocuNav and Softdocs. We have considered the submitted arguments 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 any of the remaining third parties explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of the remaining third parties 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, the district may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest any of the remaining third parties may have in the information.

Section 552.110(b) of the Government Code states, “[e]xcept as provided by [s]ection 552.0222, information is [excepted from required disclosure] if it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence that the information is a trade secret.” Gov't Code § 552.110(b). Section 552.110(a) defines a trade secret as all forms and types of information if:

- (1) the owner of the trade secret has taken reasonable measures under the circumstances to keep the information secret; and
- (2) the information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable through proper means by, another person who can obtain economic value from the disclosure or use of the information.

Id. § 552.110(a). Section 552.110(c) of the Government Code states:

Except as provided by Section 552.0222, 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 is [excepted from required disclosure].

Id. § 552.110(c). Additionally, we note section 552.0222(b) lists certain types of information to which section 552.110 does not apply. *See id.* § 552.0222(b). Section 552.1101 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) Except as provided by Section 552.0222, information submitted to a governmental body by a vendor, contractor, potential vendor, or potential contractor in response to a request for a bid, proposal, or qualification is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if the vendor, contractor, potential vendor, or potential contract that the information relates to demonstrates based on specific factual evidence that disclosure of the information would:

(1) reveal an individual approach to:

(A) work;

(B) organization structure;

(C) staffing;

(D) internal operations;

(E) processes; or

(F) discounts, pricing methodology, pricing per kilowatt hour, cost data, or other pricing information that will be used in future solicitation or bid documents, and

(2) give advantage to a competitor.

Id. § 552.1101(a). Additionally, we note section 552.0222(b) lists certain types of information to which section 552.1101(a) does not apply. *See id.* § 552.0222(b). DocuNav and Softdocs argue some of the information at issue consists of commercial or financial information subject to section 552.110(c). Upon review, we find Softdocs has demonstrated portions of its information constitute commercial or financial information, the release of which would cause substantial competitive harm. Accordingly, the district must withhold the information we marked under section 552.110(c) of the Government Code; however, to the extent Softdocs' customer information is publicly available on its website, it may not be withheld under section 552.110(c) of the Government Code.¹ However, upon review, we find some of the remaining information at issue is subject to section 552.0222(b), and may not be withheld on the basis of section 552.110(c). Additionally, we find DocuNav has failed to provide specific factual evidence demonstrating any portion of the rest of the remaining information at issue constitutes commercial or financial information, the release of which would result in substantial competitive harm. Therefore, the district may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.110(c) of the Government Code.

DocuNav and Softdocs argue some of their information consists of trade secrets subject to section 552.110(b). Upon review, however, we find some of the remaining information at issue is subject to section 552.0222(b), and may not be withheld on the basis of section 552.110(b). Additionally, we find DocuNav and Softdocs have failed to provide specific factual evidence demonstrating any portion of the rest of the remaining information at issue is a trade secret. Therefore, the district may not withhold any of the remaining information at issue under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code.

DocuNav and Softdocs assert the remaining information at issue is subject to section 552.1101. Upon review, we find DocuNav has demonstrated the applicability of section

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

552.1101(a) to some of the information at issue. Accordingly, to the extent DocuNav's customer information is not publicly available on its website, the district must withhold the information we marked under section 552.1101(a) of the Government Code. However, we find some of the remaining information at issue is subject to section 552.0222(b) and may not be withheld on the basis of section 552.1101(a). *See id.* § 552.0222(b) (listing certain types of information not excepted under section 552.1101). Additionally, we find DocuNav and Softdocs have failed to provide the specific factual evidence necessary to withhold any of the remaining information at issue under section 552.1101(a), and the district may not withhold it on that basis.

Section 552.136 of the Government Code provides, "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential."² *Id.* § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining "access device"). This office has determined insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. *See* Open Records Decision No. 684 at 9 (2009). Accordingly, the district must withhold all insurance policy numbers in the remaining information under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

We note some of the remaining information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit.

In summary, the district must withhold the information we marked under section 552.110(c) of the Government Code; however, to the extent Softdocs' customer information is publicly available on its website, it may not be withheld under section 552.110(c) of the Government Code. To the extent DocuNav's customer information is not publicly available on its website, the district must withhold the information we marked under section 552.1101(a) of the Government Code. The district must withhold all insurance policy numbers in the remaining information under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The district must release the remaining information; however, any information protected by copyright may be released only in accordance with copyright law.

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.

² The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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,

Kimbell Kesling
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KK/jxd

Ref: ID# 859731

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

5 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)