



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 26, 2022

Ms. Rebekah Wendt  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Houston  
P.O. Box 368  
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2022-02142

Dear Ms. Wendt:

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# 927306 (ORR# D000743).

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for records related to rabies vaccinations of animals at a specified address during a specified time period. The city claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the city claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses section 826.0211 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides, in part, the following:

- (a) Information contained in a rabies vaccination certificate or in any record compiled from the information contained in one or more certificates that identifies or tends to identify an owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of an owner of a vaccinated animal is confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]. The information contained in the certificate or record may not include the social security number or the driver's license number of the owner of the vaccinated animal.

Health & Safety Code § 826.0211(a). We note section 826.0211 is applicable only to information contained in a rabies vaccination certificate or in a record compiled from information contained in one or more rabies vaccination certificates. The submitted

information consists of rabies vaccination certificates. Upon review, we find section 826.0211 is applicable to some of the information at issue. Accordingly, the city must withhold the name, address, and telephone number of the owner of the vaccinated animal under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 826.0211(a) of the Health and Safety Code.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 826.0311 of the Health and Safety Code, which states, in relevant part, the following:

(a) Information that is contained in a municipal or county registry of dogs and cats under Section 826.031 that identifies or tends to identify the owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of the owner of the registered dog or cat is confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]. The information contained in the registry may not include the social security number or the driver's license number of the owner of the registered animal.

(b) The information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity or a person that, under a contract with a governmental entity, provides animal control services or animal registration services for the governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. A governmental entity or person that receives the information must maintain the confidentiality of the information, may not disclose the information under [the Act], and may not use the information for a purpose that does not directly relate to the protection of public health and safety.

*Id.* § 826.0311(a), (b). Section 826.0311 applies only to the actual pet registry; it does not apply to the contents of other records, even though those documents may contain the same information as the pet registry. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 at 3 (1996) (language of confidentiality provision controls scope of its protection); *see also* Open Records Decision Nos. 658 at 4 (1998), 478 at 2 (1987). Upon review, we find the remaining information does not identify or tend to identify the owner of a registered animal and does not consist of an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of an owner of a registered animal. Thus, the city may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 on that basis.

In summary, the city must withhold the name, address, and telephone number of the owner of the vaccinated animal under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 826.0211(a) of the Health and Safety Code. The city must release the remaining 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> As our ruling is dispositive for this information, we need not address the remaining argument against its disclosure.

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,

Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/be

Ref: ID# 927306

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)