



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 21, 2022

Mr. Santos Hinojosa
Assistant District Attorney
Brazoria County District Attorney's Office
111 East Locust Street, Suite 408A
Angleton, Texas 77515

OR2022-08018

Dear Mr. Hinojosa:

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# 936971 (County Ref. No. 21-2573).

Brazoria County (the "county") received a request for bid results related to a specified project. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Ally General Solutions, LLC; Green Dream International LLC; HTI Construction, Inc.; Matula & Matula Construction, Inc.; Tandem Services, LLC; Total Contracting Limited; and Triple B Services LLP. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified these third parties of the request for information and of their 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 you claim 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 to submit its reasons, if any, as to why info relating to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this ruling, we have not received comments from any third party. Thus, we have no basis to conclude any third party 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 county may not

withhold any portion of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest any third party may have in the information.

You argue the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Section 552.104(a) 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 you have failed to demonstrate the applicability of section 552.104 to the information at issue. Thus, we conclude the county may not withhold any portion of the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code. As no further exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the county 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,

Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/jm

Ref: ID# 936971

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

7 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)