



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 13, 2022

Ms. Audra G. Welter
Associate General Counsel
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

OR2022-10888

Dear Ms. Welter:

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# 941528 (R010611-012122).

The Texas Department of Transportation (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified request for proposals. You state the department has released some of the requested information. Although the department takes no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, the department informs us its release may implicate the proprietary interests of interested third parties. Accordingly, we understand the department notified American Guard Services, Inc. and Centerra Group, LLC of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office. *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 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) 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 third parties at issue explaining why their information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of the third parties have 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 department may not withhold any of the information at issue on the basis

of any proprietary interest the third parties at issue may have in it. The department 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,

Jennifer Copeland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JC/mo

Ref: ID# 941528

c: Requestor

Third Parties