



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 2, 2022

Mr. Bobby Preisler  
Legal Counsel  
Harris County Appraisal District  
P.O. Box 920975  
Houston, Texas 77292-0975

OR2022-15881

Dear Mr. Preisler:

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# 951440 (Ref. No. 2000002200).

The Harris County Appraisal District (the "district") received a request for certain information pertaining to specified types of properties.<sup>1</sup> You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.110 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state release of the information at issue may implicate the proprietary interests of Marvin F. Poer & Co. ("Poer"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the district notified Poer of the request for information and of its 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.

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<sup>1</sup> You state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the district sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (stating if information requested is unclear to governmental body or if large amount of information has been requested, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify or narrow request, but may not inquire into purpose for which information will be used); *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380 (Tex. 2010) (holding when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-business-day period to request attorney general opinion is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

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 Poer explaining why the information at issue should not be released. Thus, we have no basis to conclude Poer has a protected proprietary interest in the information at issue. *See, e.g., id.* § 552.110 (requiring the provision of specific factual evidence demonstrating the applicability of the exception). Therefore, the district may not withhold any portion of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the third party may have in it.

Section 552.110 of the Government Code protects (1) trade secrets, and (2) commercial or financial information the disclosure of which would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained. *See id.* § 552.110(b)-(c). Although you argue the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.110, that exception is designed to protect the interests of third parties, not the interests of a governmental body. Therefore, we do not address your argument under section 552.110 of the Government Code. As no further exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the district 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,

Blake Brennan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

BBX/jm

Ref: ID# 951440

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

c: Third Party  
(w/o enclosures)