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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 8, 2022

Mr. Eric C. Farrar
Counsel for the City of Dickinson
Olson & Olson, LLP
Wortham Tower, Suite 600
2727 Allen Parkway
Houston, Texas 77019-2133

OR2022-16377

Dear Ms. Farrar:

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# 952808 (ORR# COHM22-022).

The City of Dickinson (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified intersection. The city claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. The city also states it notified ARKK Engineers of the city's receipt of the request for information and of the right of that third party to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 at 3 (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 claimed exception 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 section encompasses section 418.181 of the Government Code, which provides "[t]hose documents or portions of documents in the possession of a governmental entity are confidential if they identify the technical details of particular vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure to an act of terrorism." *Id.* § 418.181. The fact that information may generally be related to emergency preparedness does not make the information per se confidential under section 418.181. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 at 3 (1996) (language of confidentiality provisions controls scope of its protection). As

with any confidentiality statute, a governmental body asserting section 418.181 must adequately explain how the responsive information falls within the scope of the provisions. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must explain how claimed exception to disclosure applies).

The city represents release of the submitted information would compromise the safety and security measures related to its water system. Upon review, we find the city's water system consists of critical infrastructure. *See id.* § 421.001 (defining "critical infrastructure" to include "all public or private assets, systems, and functions vital to the security, governance, public health and safety, economy, or morale of the state or the nation"). We also determine the submitted information identifies particular vulnerabilities of this critical infrastructure to an act of terrorism. Accordingly, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 418.181 of the Government Code.

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,

James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/jm

Ref: ID# 952808

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)