



Office of the Attorney General
State of Texas

DAN MORALES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

July 15, 1997

Mr. Neal J. Rackleff
Coats, Rose, Yale, Holm, Ryman
& Lee, P.C.
800 First City Tower
1001 Fannin
Houston, Texas 77002-6707

OR97-1615

Dear Mr. Rackleff:

On behalf of Lake Turner Municipal Utility District Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (the "Districts"), you ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 107724.

The Districts received a request for "'general documentation,' as you defined that term in your letter of May 1, 1997." The Districts also received a request for "all documents pertaining to" the Districts. You assert that portions of the requested information are excepted from required public disclosure by sections 552.103 and 552.107(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.103(a) of the Government Code reads as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information:

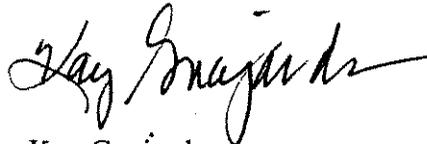
(1) relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature or settlement negotiations, to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party; and

(2) that the attorney general or the attorney of the political subdivision has determined should be withheld from public inspection.

To secure the protection of section 552.103(a), a governmental body must demonstrate that requested information "relates" to a pending or reasonably anticipated judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding. Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the applicability of an exception in a particular situation. The test for establishing that section 552.103 applies is a two-prong showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210 (Tex. App.--Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.). In this instance, you have made the requisite showing that the requested information relates to pending litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). See Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991). The Districts may withhold the requested records from public disclosure based on section 552.103 of the Government Code.¹

In light of our decision under section 552.103, we need not consider your section 552.107(1) claim at this time. We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Kay Guajardo
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KHG/rho

Ref.: ID# 107724

Enclosures: Submitted documents

¹If the opposing party in the litigation has seen or had access to any of the information in these records, there would be no justification for now withholding that information from the requestor pursuant to section 552.103(a). Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). In addition, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation is concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

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