Office of the Attorney General · State of Texas
John Cornyn

September 21, 2000

Ms. Lisa M. Salinas
Custodian of Records
Baytown Police Department
3200 North Main Street
Baytown, Texas 77521

OR2000-3650

Dear Ms. Salinas:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 140797.

The Baytown Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified investigative file. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108(a)(1), 552.108(b)(1), and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

First, you claim the orange highlighted material is protected from disclosure under section 552.108(a)(1) and (b)(1) of the Government Code. Under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime" need not be disclosed if "release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). You state that the requested information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Accordingly, we find that release of the requested information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime, *see Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.–Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), and we conclude that the department may withhold the orange highlighted information under section 552.108(a)(1), subject to section 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) states that basic information about an arrested person, and arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. 531 S.W.2d at 177. Thus, with the exception of the basic front page offense and arrest report

information, you may withhold the requested information from disclosure based on section 552.108(a)(1).[1]

You also assert that five Texas driver's license numbers highlighted in pink are excepted from disclosure under section 552.130. Under section 552.130(a)(1) of the Government Code, information relating to "a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state" is excepted from application of the disclosure requirements of the Public Information Act. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). Therefore, you must withhold the highlighted driver's license numbers under section 552.130(a) of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental

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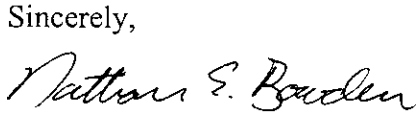
[1]Because we find that the orange highlighted information may be withheld under section 552.108(a)(1), we need not reach the issue of whether the same information should be excluded under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code.

body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Nathan E. Bowden
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NEB/cwt

Ref: ID# 140797

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Bill Soulios
11013 Fuqua #141
Houston, Texas 77089
(w/o enclosures)