OFFICE of the ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

March 4, 2003

Mr. James L. Hall
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2003-1382

Dear Mr. Hall:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 177362.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for a specified investigative report. You claim that a portion of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note that the submitted information consists of a completed investigation made of, for, or by the department. Section 552.022(a)(1) of the Government Code thus provides that this information is not excepted from required disclosure under the Public Information Act, except as provided by section 552.108, or unless the information is expressly confidential under other law. Because you claim that a portion of the submitted information is confidential under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 508.313 of the Government Code, we will address this assertion for the submitted information.

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. You assert that a portion of the submitted information is made confidential by section 508.313 of the Government Code. In pertinent part, section 508.313 states:

> (a) All information obtained and maintained, including a victim protest letter or other correspondence, a victim impact statement, a list of inmates eligible for release on parole, and an arrest record of an inmate, is confidential and privileged if the information relates to:

> (1) an inmate of the institutional division subject to release on parole, release to mandatory supervision, or executive clemency;
>
> (2) a releasee; or
>
> (3) a person directly identified in any proposed plan of release for an inmate.

You state that the requested investigative report "contains information held by the Parole Division of [the department] about a 'releasee.'" Based on your representations and our review of the submitted information, we agree that the submitted information is made confidential by section 508.313(a)(1) and must therefore be withheld under section 552.101 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 body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. 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 Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement 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. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. 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,

W. Montgomery Meitler
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

WMM/lmt

Ref: ID# 177362

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Randall Parker
1720 John West Road, Apt. 103C
Dallas, Texas 75228
(w/o enclosures)