



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

April 15, 2003

Mr. Robert G. Schleier, Jr.
Schleier & Brown
116 North Kilgore Street
Kilgore, Texas 75662

OR2003-2547

Dear Mr. Schleier:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 179705.

The City of Kilgore (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified person. You indicate that the request concerns a particular arrest regarding the person. You state that you have provided the requestor with some responsive information. You claim, however, that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and have reviewed the submitted information. We have also considered comments submitted by the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (providing that person may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Section 552.108 provides in pertinent part that information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from disclosure if "release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 as an exception to disclosure of requested information must demonstrate, if the information does not supply the explanation on its face, how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(a), (b), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the submitted information relates to a matter that has been forwarded to the district attorney's office for prosecution. Based on our review of your representations and the submitted information, we find that the release of most portions of the submitted information "would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a).

We note, however, that section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Company 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). *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of basic information that must be made available to public). Thus, the city must release the types of information that are considered to be basic front page offense report information, even if this information is not actually located on the front page of the offense report. Otherwise, we conclude that the city may withhold the submitted information pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) 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,



Ronald J. Bounds
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RJB/lmt

Ref: ID# 179705

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Fred Gough
3535 CR 195 D
Kilgore, Texas 75662
(w/o enclosures)