



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 16, 2007

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Division
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2007-06039

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

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# 283195.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for reports made by the requestors during a specified time interval. You claim that some of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the information you submitted.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to the information

¹This letter ruling assumes that the submitted representative sample of information is truly representative of the requested information as a whole. This ruling neither reaches nor authorizes the department to withhold any information that is substantially different from the submitted information. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301(e)(1)(D), .302; Open Records Decision Nos. 499 at 6 (1988), 497 at 4 (1988).

at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You have marked the information that the department seeks to withhold under section 552.108. You inform us that the marked information is related to a pending case. Based on your representation, we conclude that the department may withhold the marked information under section 552.108(a)(1).² *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).

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit or a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state. *See Gov't Code* § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). We note that some of the information that you seek to withhold relates to a vehicle that belongs to one of the requestors. We have marked that information. Because section 552.130 protects personal privacy, the requestor has a right of access to his own Texas motor vehicle information under section 552.023 of the Government Code, and the department may not withhold that information in this instance under section 552.130. *See Gov't Code* § 552.023(a); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). We agree that the department must withhold the rest of the Texas driver's license and motor vehicle information that you have marked under section 552.130.

In summary: (1) the department may withhold the marked information that is related to the pending case under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code; and (2) except for the requestor's Texas motor vehicle information, the department must withhold the Texas driver's license and motor vehicle information that you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The rest of the submitted information must be released.³

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

²As we are able to make this determination, we need not address your claim under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

³Should the department receive another request for the same records from a person who would not have a right of access to the requestor's Texas motor vehicle information, the department should resubmit these records and request another decision. *See Gov't Code* §§ 552.301(a), .302.

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).

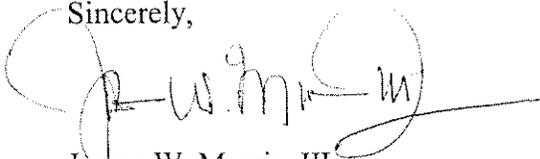
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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 Office of the Attorney General 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. W. Morris, III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/ma

Ref: ID# 283195

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Lloyd and Rhonda Scantlen
5819 Cary Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75227
(w/o enclosures)