



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 4, 2007

Ms. Angela M. DeLuca  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of College Station  
P.O. Box 9960  
College Station, Texas 77842

OR2007-11436

Dear Ms. DeLuca:

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# 288269.

The City of College Station (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to environmental conditions, complaints, violations, and spills at a specified location, as well as building and utility information at the same specified location. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.133 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that you have only submitted for our review one document pertaining to utilities. To the extent any other responsive information existed on the date the city received this request, we assume you have released it. If you have not released any such information, you must do so at this time.<sup>1</sup> See Gov't Code § § 552.301(a), .302; see also Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.133 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a public power utility's information related to a competitive matter. Section 552.133(b) provides:

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<sup>1</sup>We note that the Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when it received a request or create responsive information. See *Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 555 at 1 (1990), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

Information or records are excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if the information or records are reasonably related to a competitive matter, as defined in this section. Excepted information or records include the text of any resolution of the public power utility governing body determining which issues, activities, or matters constitute competitive matters. Information or records of a municipally owned utility that are reasonably related to a competitive matter are not subject to disclosure under this chapter, whether or not, under the Utilities Code, the municipally owned utility has adopted customer choice or serves in a multiply certificated service area. This section does not limit the right of a public power utility governing body to withhold from disclosure information deemed to be within the scope of any other exception provided for in this chapter, subject to the provisions of this chapter.

Gov't Code § 552.133(b). Section 552.133(a)(3) defines a "competitive matter" as a matter the public power utility governing body in good faith determines by vote to be related to the public power utility's competitive activity, and the release of which would give an advantage to competitors or prospective competitors. *See id.* § 552.133(a)(3). However, section 552.133(a)(3) also provides thirteen categories of information that may not be deemed competitive matters. The attorney general may conclude that section 552.133 is inapplicable to the requested information only if, based on the information provided, the attorney general determines the public power utility governing body has not acted in good faith in determining that the issue, matter, or activity is a competitive matter or that the information requested is not reasonably related to a competitive matter. Gov't Code § 552.133(c).

You inform us that the city council, as governing body of the city's public power utility, passed a resolution by vote pursuant to section 552.133 in which the city council delineated a list of competitive matters. You further inform us that the submitted information is encompassed by the city's resolution. The submitted information is not among the thirteen categories of information that section 552.133(a)(3) expressly excludes from the definition of competitive matter. Furthermore, we have no evidence that the city failed to act in good faith. *See id.* § 552.133(c). Consequently, we determine that the submitted information relates to a competitive matter in accordance with the city council's resolution and is therefore excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.133 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, 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,



Kara A. Batey  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KAB/jh

Ref: ID# 288269

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Josue Garcia  
ATC Associates, Inc.  
3928 Bluebonnet Drive  
Stafford, Texas 77477  
(w/o enclosures)