



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 13, 2007

Ms. Zandra L. Pulis
Senior Counsel
Legal Services Division
CPS Energy
P.O. Box 1771

OR2007-11981

Dear Ms. Pulis:

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# 289081.

The City Public Service Board of the City of San Antonio d/b/a CPS Energy ("CPS") received a request for all invoices from Texas Alternator for the years 2005 and 2006. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.104 and 552.133 of the Government Code. You further claim that the submitted information may contain proprietary information subject to exception under the Act. You state, and provide documentation showing, that you notified Texas Alternator of CPS's receipt of the request for information and its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released to the requestor. *See Gov't Code § 552.305(d); see also Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances).* We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

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:

Information or records are excepted from the requirements of
Section 552.021 if the information or records are reasonably related to a

¹ We assume that the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988).* This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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).

CPS is a public power utility for purposes of section 552.133. CPS informs us, and provides documentation showing, that the CPS Energy Board of Trustees (the "board"), as governing body of CPS, passed a resolution by vote pursuant to section 552.133 in which the board defined the information considered to be within the scope of the term "competitive matter." CPS asserts that the requested information comes within the scope of the resolution. The requested 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 board failed to act in good faith. *See id.* § 552.133(c). Consequently, we determine that the requested information relates to a competitive matter in accordance with the submitted resolution. Therefore, CPS must withhold the requested information pursuant to section 552.133 of the Government Code. As this ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

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).

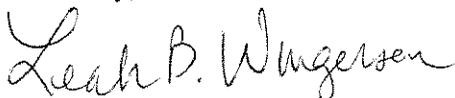
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records 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,



Leah B. Wingerson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LBW/ma

Ref: ID# 289081

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Lonnie Bain
Big Moe Alternators and Starters
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San Antonio, Texas 78216
(w/o enclosures)