



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 10, 2008

Ms. Leslie B. Garvin  
Public Records Manager  
Katy Independent School District  
P.O. Box 159  
Katy, Texas 77492-0159

OR2008-12462

Dear Ms. Garvin:

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# 325477.

The Katy Independent School District (the "district") received a request for proposals submitted by two separate companies in response to a particular request for proposals. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104 excepts from disclosure "information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder." The purpose of section 552.104 is to protect a governmental body's interests in competitive bidding situations. *See* Open Records Decision No. 592 (1991). Moreover, section 552.104 requires a showing of some actual or specific harm in a particular competitive situation; a general allegation that a competitor will gain an unfair advantage will not suffice. Open Records Decision No. 541 at 4 (1990). Section 552.104 does not except from disclosure information relating to competitive bidding situations once a contract has been executed. Open Records Decision Nos. 306 (1982), 184 (1978).

You state that the district, while no longer accepting bids, is currently seeking to clarify bids and that the bidders remain at liberty to furnish additional information. Furthermore, you state that software demonstrations and contract negotiations are ongoing. Based on your

representations, we conclude that the district may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104 of the Government Code until such time as a contract has been executed. *See* Open Records Decision No. 170 at 2 (1977) (release of bids while negotiation of proposed contract is in progress would necessarily result in an advantage to certain bidders at the expense of others and could be detrimental to the public interest in the contract under negotiation). However, the district may no longer withhold the submitted information under this exception to disclosure once a contract has been executed and is in effect. *See* Open Records Decision No. 541 at 5 (1990).

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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3). If the governmental body does not file suit over 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 challenge 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,



Emily Sitton  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EBS/eeg

Ref: ID# 325477

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Matthew Fraker  
Prologic Technology Systems, Inc.  
9600 North Mopac Expressway, Suite. 300  
Austin, Texas 78759  
(w/o enclosures)