



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 14, 2009

Mr. Vic Ramirez
Associate General Counsel
Lower Colorado River Authority
P.O. Box 220
Austin, Texas 78767-0220

OR2009-04904

Dear Mr. Ramirez:

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# 339947.

The Lower Colorado River Authority (the "authority") received a request for "the electric rate the authority charges companies like Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative" ("Bluebonnet"). You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.133 of the Government Code. You also state that release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Bluebonnet. Accordingly, you have notified Bluebonnet of the request and of its opportunity to submit arguments to this office as to why the contract should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining that statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain the applicability of exception to disclose under Act in certain circumstances). We have received comments from Bluebonnet. We have considered the arguments and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

¹We 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.

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 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 authority is the governing body of a public power utility. You further inform us, and provide documentation showing, that the authority adopted a resolution that defines contract information to be within the scope of the term "competitive matter." The submitted contract and amendments are not among the thirteen categories of information that section 552.133(a)(3) expressly excludes from the definition of a competitive matter. Furthermore, we have no evidence that the authority failed to act in good faith. *See id.* § 552.133(c). Consequently, we determine that the submitted contract and amendments relate to a competitive matter in accordance with the authority's resolution you have provided and, therefore, are excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.133 of the Government Code. As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address Bluebonnet's arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Adam Leiber
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACL/jb

Ref: ID# 339947

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)