



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

February 18, 2010

Ms. Cheryl Byles
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2010-02458

Dear Ms. Byles:

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# 370729 (PIR# 0935-10).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for the names and addresses of new water account customers during a specified time period. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 182.052 of the Utilities Code provides, in relevant part:

(a) Except as provided by Section 182.054, a government-operated utility may not disclose personal information in a customer's account record, or any

¹We assume 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

information relating to the volume or units of utility usage or the amounts billed to or collected from the individual for utility usage, if the customer requests that the government-operated utility keep the information confidential. However, a government-operated utility may disclose information related to the customer's volume or units of utility usage or amounts billed to or collected from the individual for utility usage if the primary source of water for such utility was a sole-source designated aquifer.

(b) A customer may request confidentiality by delivering to the government-operated utility an appropriately marked form provided under Subsection (c)(3) or any other written request for confidentiality.

Util. Code § 182.052(a)-(b). "Personal information" under section 182.052(a) means an individual's address, telephone number, or social security number, but does not include the individual's name. *See id.* § 182.051(4); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 625 (1994) (construing statutory predecessor). We note a post office box number is not an address for the purposes of section 182.052. Water service is included in the scope of utility services covered by section 182.052. Util. Code § 182.051(3). Section 182.054 of the Utilities Code provides six exceptions to the disclosure prohibition found in section 182.052. *See id.* § 182.054.

You state the information you have marked is the personal information of individual customers who timely requested confidentiality under section 182.052. You do not indicate any of the exceptions to confidentiality under section 182.054 apply in this instance. We understand the primary source of water for the city's utility services is not a sole-source designated aquifer. Based on your representations and our review of the information at issue, we agree the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 182.052 of the Utilities Code. However, as stated above, a customer's name is not included in the definition of personal information, and a post office box number is not an address for purposes of section 182.052. Further, a portion of the information you have marked reflects the individual at issue did not elect confidentiality. Therefore, you have failed to demonstrate the remaining information you have marked is confidential under section 182.052. Accordingly, the city may not withhold any portion of the remaining information at issue under section 552.101 on that basis. As you raise no further exceptions to disclosure of the remaining information, it must be released.

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, toll free at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/jb

Ref: ID# 370729

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)