



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 9, 2010

Ms. Candice M. De La Garza
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2010-11978

Dear Ms. De La Garza:

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# 390339.

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to an audit of city buildings. Although you state the city takes no position with respect to the public availability of the submitted information, you state its release may implicate the proprietary interests of Siemens Industry, Inc. ("Siemens"). Accordingly, you notified Siemens of the request and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why its information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining 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 reviewed the submitted information.

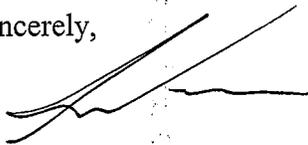
An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of a governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) of the Government Code to submit its reasons, if any, as to why requested information relating to that party should be withheld from disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, Siemens has not submitted comments to this office explaining why any portion of the submitted information should not be released to the requestor. Thus, we have no basis to conclude the release of the submitted information would implicate the proprietary interests of Siemens, and none of the information may be withheld on that ground. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (stating that business enterprise that claims exception for commercial or financial information under section 552.110(b) must show by specific factual evidence that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret).

We note some of the submitted information is protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1978). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. Accordingly, as no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the city must release the submitted information, but any information protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/eeg

Ref: ID# 390339

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Chad Nobles
8850 Fallbrook
Houston, Texas 77064
(w/o enclosures)