



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 26, 2010

Mr. R. Brooks Moore  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas A&M University System  
200 Technology Way, Suite 2079  
College Station, Texas 77845-3424

OR2010-13010

Dear Mr. Moore:

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# 392420.

Texas A&M University (the "university") received a request for six categories of communications between the governor and named university officials, including communications relating to the university's existing or prospective athletic conference participation, communications with the University of Texas athletic director, the Southeastern Conference Commissioner, the Big 12 Conference commissioner or other Big 12 officials, and communications regarding a potential vote on moving to the Southeastern Conference. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.151 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

Initially, we note some of the requested information may have been the subject of previous requests for information, in response to which this office issued Open Records Letter Nos. OR2010-12031 (2010) and 2010-12894 (2010). We have no indication the law, facts, or circumstances on which these prior rulings were based have changed. Accordingly, with regard to any information responsive to the instant request that was previously requested and ruled on by this office, we conclude the university must continue to withhold or release such information in accordance with these prior rulings. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely

same information as was addressed in a prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure). To the extent any requested information was not previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we will consider your request for a ruling.

Next, we must address the university's obligations under the Act. Pursuant to section 552.301(e) of the Government Code, the governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving the request (1) general written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). As of the date of this letter, you have not submitted to this office comments explaining why any of the stated exceptions apply, nor have you submitted a copy or representative sample of the information requested. Consequently, we find the university failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to submit to this office the information required in section 552.301(e) results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a governmental body may demonstrate a compelling reason to withhold information by showing the information is made confidential by another source of law or affects third party interests. *See* ORD 630. Because the university has failed to comply with the requirements of the Act, the university has waived all of its claimed discretionary exceptions to disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Although the university also raises mandatory exceptions to disclosure, because you have not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the information confidential by law. We, therefore, conclude the university must release the requested information that was not previously ruled upon by this office to the requestor pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code.

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](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,



Mack T. Harrison  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MTH/em

Ref: ID# 392420

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)