



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 6, 2010

Ms. Ruth J. Soucy
Deputy General Counsel for Open Records
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
P.O. Box 13528
Austin, Texas 78711-3528

OR2010-18263

Dear Ms. Soucy:

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# 402142 (ORR# 6628348438).

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (the "comptroller") received a request for all complaints against the requestor or his company, including complaints from a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). We note section 552.108 applies only to records created by an agency, or a portion of an agency, whose primary function is the investigation of crimes and enforcement of criminal laws. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 493 (1988), 287 (1981)*. Section 552.108 is generally not applicable to records created by an agency whose chief function is essentially regulatory in nature. *See Open Records Decision No. 199 (1978)*. The comptroller is a law enforcement agency for purposes of

administering the Tax Code. *A&T Consultants, Inc. v. Sharp*, 904 S.W.2d 668, 678-679 (Tex. 1995). You state the submitted complaint pertains to an active criminal investigation by your Criminal Investigations Division. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. See *Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e.*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). Thus, the comptroller may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.¹

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/tf

Ref: ID# 402142

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of the submitted information.