



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 13, 2011

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

OR2011-00648

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# 406316 (TAMU PIR #10-571).

Texas A&M University (the "university") received a request for the winning proposal submitted in response to a specified request for qualifications. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104 of the Government Code protects from required public disclosure "information which, if released, would give advantage to competitors or bidders." Gov't Code § 552.104. The purpose of section 552.104 is to protect the purchasing interests of a governmental body in competitive bidding situations where the governmental body wishes to withhold information in order to obtain more favorable offers. *See* Open Records Decision No. 592 (1991). Section 552.104 protects information from disclosure if the governmental body demonstrates potential harm to its interests in a particular competitive situation. *See* Open Records Decision No. 463 (1987). Generally, section 552.104 does not except bids from disclosure after bidding is completed and the contract has been awarded. *See* Open Records Decision No. 541 (1990).

You state a contract for the project at issue had not been fully negotiated or executed at the time of the request. You assert release of the requested information at this stage in the

bidding process would harm the university's ability to negotiate a final agreement. Based on your representations, we conclude the university may withhold the requested information under section 552.104 of the Government Code until such time as a contract has been executed. *See* Open Records Decision No. 170 at 2 (1977) (release of bids while negotiation of proposed contract is in progress would necessarily result in an advantage to certain bidders at the expense of others and could be detrimental to public interest in the contract under negotiation).

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,



Paige Lay
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PL/vb

Ref: ID# 406316

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)