



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 21, 2011

Mr. John Ferguson  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2011-17118

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

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# 441670 (PIR# 11-2707).

The Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for information related to a fatal accident. You state some responsive information has been provided to the requestor. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses information that other statutes make confidential. Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of criminal history record information ("CHRI") that states obtain from the federal government or other states. Open Records Decision No. 565 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual law with respect to CHRI it generates. *Id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI that the department maintains, except that the department may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 411.083. Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for a criminal

justice purpose. *Id.* § 411.089(b)(1). Other entities specified in chapter 411 of the Government Code are entitled to obtain CHRI from the department or another criminal justice agency; however, those entities may not release CHRI except as provided by chapter 411. *See generally id.* §§ 411.090-.127. The information you have marked consists of CHRI that must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code and federal law.

Next, section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state or another state or country. Act of May 24, 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., S.B. 1638, § 4 (to be codified as an amendment to Gov't Code § 552.130). The department must withhold the driver's license number you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.147 of the Government Code provides "[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from" required public disclosure under the Act. Gov't Code § 552.147(b). Therefore, the department may withhold the social security number you have marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108 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).

You state the remaining information relates to a pending criminal case. Based on this representation and our review, we conclude that the release of this information 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, the department may withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code and federal law, and the driver's license number you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department may withhold the social security number you have marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code. The department may withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The remaining information 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](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,



Cindy Nettles  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 441670

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)