ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 18, 2012

Ms. Andrea M. Gardner
City Manager
City of Copperas Cove
P.O. Drawer 1449
Copperas Cove, Texas 76522

OR2012-11146

Dear Ms. Gardner:

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# 463741.

The Copperas Cove Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note that the submitted information contains a CR-3 accident report form completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code states that except as provided by subsection (c) or (e), accident reports are privileged and for the confidential use of certain specified entities. *Id.* § 550.065(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) the date of the accident; (2) the name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) the specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, a governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides two or more pieces of information specified by the statute. *Id.*

In this instance, the requestor has provided the department with the requisite pieces of information. Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the

Government Code, we note information that is specifically made public by statute may not be withheld from the public under any of the exceptions to public disclosure under the Act. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 544 (1990), 378 (1983), 161 (1977), 146 (1976). Accordingly, the department must release the submitted CR-3 accident report forms pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code.

We next address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining information. Section 552.108 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, however, the information at issue includes DIC-24 statutory warning and DIC-25 notice of suspension forms. Because copies of those documents are provided to the person who is the subject of the warning and the notice, we find release of the statutory warning and the notice of suspension forms will not interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms may not be withheld under section 552.108.

You state the remaining information relates to an open criminal case. Based on this representation, we find that release of the 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. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curium*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure "basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime." *Id.* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic "front-page" information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-187; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license, title, or registration, issued by an agency of this state or another state or country. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). We note the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms contain driver's license numbers. The department must withhold the driver's license numbers we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.130.

In summary, the department must release the submitted CR-3 accident report forms pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. Except for the marked driver's license number, which the department must withhold under section 552.130 of the Government Code, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms must be released. Except for basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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, 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

Paige Lay
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PL/som

Ref: ID# 463741

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)