



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 24, 2012

Mr. Gregory A. Alicie
Open Records Specialist
Baytown Police Department
3200 North Main Street
Baytown, Texas 77521

OR2012-13512

Dear Mr. Alicie:

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# 467531.

The Baytown Police Department(the "department") received two requests for information pertaining to a specified case. You state the department will redact the partial social security numbers you have marked pursuant to section 552.147(b) of the Government Code.¹ You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we must address the department's obligations under the Act. Section 552.301 of the Government Code describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information it wishes to withhold. Pursuant to section 552.301(b) of the Government Code, the governmental body must request a ruling from this office and state the exceptions to disclosure that apply within ten business days after receiving the request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b). The department received the first

¹Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act. *See* Gov't Code § 552.147(b).

request for information on July 19, 2012. Accordingly, the department's ten-business-day deadline was August 2, 2012. However, the envelope in which you submitted your request for a decision from this office bears a meter-mark of August 3, 2012. *See id.* § 552.308 (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail). Consequently, we find the department failed to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301.

A governmental body's failure to comply with section 552.301 results in the waiver of its claims under the exceptions at issue, unless the governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *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, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). You claim an exception to disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Because section 552.130 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome this presumption, we will consider this exception.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides that information relating to a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(2). The department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.130.² The department must release the remaining information.

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

²We note this office issued Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold certain categories of information, including Texas license plate numbers under section 552.130 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

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,



Tamara H. Holland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

THH/ag

Ref: ID# 467531

c. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)