



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 25, 2013

Mr. R. Brooks Moore
Managing Counsel, Governance
The Texas A&M University System
301 Tarrow Street, 6th Floor
College Station, Texas 77840-7896

OR2013-18580

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# 504522 (TAMU 13-486).

Texas A&M University (the "university") received a request for the awarded response to the university's request for proposal number 13-0025. Although you take no position as to whether the requested information is excepted under the Act, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interest of Belmont Icehouse ("Belmont"). Accordingly, you state you notified Belmont of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue should not be released. *See Gov't Code § 552.305(d); see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B)*. As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from Belmont explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we

have no basis to conclude Belmont has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the university may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Belmont may have in the information.

We note some of the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the university must release the submitted information; however, any information protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paige Thompson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Paige Thompson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PT/dls

Ref: ID# 504522

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Tim Hudson
Belmont Icehouse
3116 Commerce Street, Suite D
Dallas, Texas 75226
(w/o enclosures)