



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 7, 2014

Ms. Catelyn H. Kostbar
Administrative Technician III
Harris County Appraisal District
P.O. Box 920975
Houston, Texas 77040

OR2014-17886

Dear Ms. Kostbar:

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# 539093 (ORR# 14-2690).

The Harris County Appraisal District (the "district") received a request for the vehicle identification number, make, model, and year for a specified vehicle on a specified account. You state the district will release some of the requested information. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the requestor seeks only the vehicle identification number, make, model, and year for the specified vehicle. You have submitted a document that contains information beyond these specific pieces of information. Thus, the portions of the submitted document that do not consist of the information requested are not responsive to the present request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request and the district is not required to release that information in response to the request.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal

¹You state the district did not comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting a ruling from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nonetheless, because the exception you claim can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness, we will consider its applicability to the submitted information. *See id.* §§ 552.007, .302, .352.

identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. Upon review, we agree the submitted vehicle identification number consists of motor vehicle record information. We note section 552.130 protects personal privacy. In this instance, the requestor may be the authorized representative of the owner of the vehicle at issue. If the requestor is the authorized representative of the owner, then the requestor has a right of access to his client's motor vehicle record information under section 552.023 of the Government Code and it may not be withheld from him under section 552.130. *See id.* § 552.023(a) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates or person's agent on ground that information is considered confidential by privacy principles); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). However, if the requestor is not the authorized representative of the owner of the vehicle at issue, then the district must withhold the vehicle identification number at issue, which you have marked, under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The district must release the remaining responsive 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.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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 539093

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)