



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 29, 2016

Ms. Molly Cost  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2016-17162

Dear Ms. Cost:

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# 620740 (PIR Nos. 16-2102 and 16-3321).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received two requests from the same requestor for information pertaining to a specified case to include: (1) notes or written reports regarding a specified interview, (2) a specified DNA report, and (3) a specified letter.<sup>1</sup> You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. You have also submitted comments from the 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office"). We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information. We have also received comments from the El Paso County Sheriff's Office of Colorado. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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,

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<sup>1</sup>You state the department sought and received clarification of the request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (providing that if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding that when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification or narrowing of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-day period to request attorney general ruling is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” *Id.* § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must 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). The district attorney’s office states the submitted information is related to a criminal investigation that is pending with the district attorney’s office. The district attorney’s office asserts release of the submitted information would interfere with the investigation. Based on these representations, we conclude release of the submitted 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 curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Accordingly, the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney’s office.<sup>2</sup>

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](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,



Britni Ramirez  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

BR/bhf

Ref: ID# 620740

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.