

The Public Information Act

The Public Information Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 552, gives you the right to access government records; and an officer for public information and the officer's agent may not ask why you want them. All government information is presumed to be available to the public.

Effective 09-01-2015, HB 685 amends Section 552.221 of the Government Code, adding subsection (b-1), which states an office for public information for a political subdivision of this state complies with Subsection (a) by referring a requestor to a website maintained by the political subdivision and accessible to the public if the requested information is identifiable and readily available on that website. The Attorney General's (AG) opinion informs the County Appraisal District's their mineral ownership and interest information received from their third party appraisal firms are confidential under section 22.27(a) and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code. (*See* Open Records Decision No. 387 (1983)(stating, among other things, that names and addresses of owners and ownership interest of each owner contained in division orders of wells and leases provided to appraisal district **under a promise of confidentiality** are confidential pursuant to section 22.27 of the Tax Code). Therefore, the AG opinion would be inclusive to the mineral ownership and interest information displayed on property search websites.