

## **GLO PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS FAQs**

### **What is the Public Information Act?**

The Public Information Act (Act), previously known as the Open Records Act, is located at Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. The Act provides a means for citizens to inspect or copy government records. It also provides for occasions in which governmental bodies, like the General Land Office (GLO), wishes to, or is required by law to; withhold government records from the public.

### **How do I make a request for public information?**

The request must be in writing and must be addressed to the GLO. The Public Information Act specifies that written requests activate a governmental body's obligation under the law. While the request does not need to be addressed to any particular person, it is a good practice to clearly label your correspondence as a "Public Information Request." Requests sent via fax or e-mail must be addressed to Hadassah Schloss, the GLO's designated Public Information Officer.

### **What should I write in my public information request?**

No "magic language" is required to activate the Act. You should however, make the request as clear and specific as possible. This will allow the GLO to identify precisely what information you are requesting.

### **How long does the GLO have to respond to my request for information?**

The Act provides that the GLO must respond "promptly" to a request for information. If the GLO is unable to produce the requested information within ten business days, the officer for public information must send you correspondence certifying that she is unable to do so and she must set a date and time when the records will be available to you.

### **Will I have to pay for copies of my requested information or for staff time in preparing my request?**

The Act generally provides for allowable charges for copies of and access to public information. All charges must be calculated in accordance with the rules promulgated by the AG. The AG's Office has set a charge of 10 cents per page for making simple photocopies or printouts. Additionally, a request for copies and/or printouts that results in more than fifty pages also may be assessed charges for labor, overhead and materials.

**When may the GLO refuse to release the information I request?**

If the information you request falls within one of the exceptions to disclosure found in the Act, the GLO may refuse to release the information while it seeks an open records decision from the AG. Unless the GLO has a previous determination from a court or the AG regarding the exact information requested, the GLO cannot determine on its own to withhold the information.