

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference
April 18, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) meeting was held via regular teleconference on April 18, 2007 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT. The agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. Action items are included in Attachment C. The official signature of the Chair or Vice-Chair is included in Attachment D.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Lara Autry (USEPA/ORD) welcomed Board members. Ms. Autry then handed the meeting over to the ELAB chair, Mr. Robert Wyeth (Severn Trent Laboratories), who took a roll call of the Board. There were no guests that participated in the call.

AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO PREVIOUS MEETING/CALL MINUTES

Minutes from February 21, 2007 meeting –Mr. Wyeth noted that he had received comments on the minutes. He made changes based on the comments and had finalized the minutes.

Minutes from the face-to-face meeting – Mr. Wyeth noted that he worked with Dr. Pletl to finalize the minutes from the face-to-face meeting.

Minutes from March 21, 2007 meeting – Mr. Wyeth noted that the he had sent the minutes to ELAB members. He asked ELAB members to review and send comments/changes to him.

WORK GROUP CORRESPONDENCE TO FEM

Performance Approach

Ms. Autry noted that the FEM has agreed to postpone ELAB's presentation to their next meeting in July. This will give ELAB more time to prepare for its presentation to the FEM and to prepare for the meeting with Dr. Gray. Mr. Wyeth agreed that this was a good idea since ELAB members need to focus their energies on getting ready for the meeting with Dr. Gray.

Ms. Autry noted that the FEM is very grateful for the information ELAB provided on performance approach. She indicated that the half-day session on performance approach was very successful. It provided the opportunity for Programs to share information on the current status of implementation of performance approach. At the meeting, the group realized that part of the reason this program never worked is the simple fact that the Agency had put together an initial concept that is a one-size-fits-all approach, but that is not the way the Agency works. The FEM is working on re-defining what performance approach really is. There will be another meeting on performance approach in July.

Mr. Wyeth noted that ELAB had sent the performance approach letter to the FEM. He thanked Mr. Dechant and Mr. Pardue for their help in drafting the letter. He noted that ELAB will re-focus on the content of that letter as they prepare to meet with the FEM in July. Mr. Wyeth asked ELAB members to review the document and note if there are other things that need to be addressed; the document will not be changed but those issues can be included as part of the presentation to the FEM.

Ms. Morgan asked whether there is any resistance from the FEM in regards to applying the performance approach to the drinking water methods. Ms. Autry noted that there is no resistance from any of the Program Offices to implement the performance approach. She noted that the true emphasis is to make sure that everyone understands that one size does not fit all and there are Programs that will have to do things in a different way. She indicated that the Office of Water is working on trying to fix some of the problems that had occurred in the past and remove barriers to performance approach. It is important that people be educated about what each Program can do in regards to performance approach given their statutory requirements and limitations. Mr. Wyeth asked whether it is fair to assume that the more prescriptive the methods within a Program Office the more problematic implementation of performance approach will be. Ms. Autry indicated that there are reasons for certain things being very prescriptive; this presents a challenge when trying to add flexibility. She noted that implementation of performance approach will follow a grading approach; the process itself will unfold over a two year period. She indicated that the Agency is committed to get things moving as soon as possible, but for areas that are very prescriptive the process will take some time. She indicated that some Program Offices may need to deal with the process in a different way.

Ms. Autry also noted that the Agency will try to reach out to stakeholders through a Performance Approach session at the next NEMC meeting in August. Ms. Autry indicated that stakeholders' participation in the process of implementing performance approach is very important to the Agency. Mr. Wyeth asked whether the NELAC Institute will also be involved. Ms. Autry noted that the NELAC Institute is very interested in partnering with the Agency in this process.

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Monitoring Work Group

Ms. Morgan noted that at their last meeting the workgroup discussed issues related to the method update rule. She asked ELAB members if they know of any additional issues or problems associated with this rule. Mr. Wyeth noted that this information is needed for the letter the workgroup is preparing. He noted that the workgroup has identified two major issues: problems with certification and compliance and increased cost of compliance for some very specific analytes. Ms. Morgan stated that an additional issue is the allowance for microwave digestion for ICP metals.

It was reported during the workgroup call by Dr. Pletl that he had received a letter from the Office of Water explaining how in the methods update rule online methods are the same as methods in the 21st edition of Standard Methods. It was suggested that the Monitoring workgroup review this letter and determine if they agree with this statement.

It was also noted that, in the methods update rule, there are some significant changes in holding times and preservation for some of the analytes. These changes create inconsistencies with the requirements in SW-846. It was also noted that the rule specifies holding times and preservation requirements that are not acceptable to other EPA Program Offices.

Mr. Wyeth indicated that the letter will address all these issues. Mr. Wyeth suggested that the letter include not only descriptions of problems but also proposed solutions. He asked ELAB members to submit any additional issues or concerns about the rule to Ms. Morgan.

Laboratory Management Work Group

Dr. Flowers indicated that there was nothing to report from the workgroup. He asked ELAB members if there is anything else that the workgroup should be discussing besides the issue of consistency.

It was noted that it would be interesting to discuss the assessor certification process. There are no requirements for or an official certification program for assessors.

Dr. Flowers asked whether PTOB is the right approach to oversight. He wondered whether there is a more cost-effective way of doing this. Mr. Wyeth noted that PTOB is an active point of discussion within TNI, specifically its rules of operation. He suggested that ELAB should let TNI sort out where they are now before ELAB decides to address this topic. Mr. Dechant noted that TNI is not actually running the PT program and will not take ownership until they have developed the process under which they are going to operate. Mr. Wyeth noted that TNI is developing a memorandum of understanding with A2LA.

Mr. Wyeth asked Ms. Morgan to provide an update on the discussion the workgroup has had with Lynn Bradley. Ms. Morgan noted that Ms. Bradley has been working on the creation of a clearinghouse to address questions on methods interpretation. The initial objective was to capture the institutional memory before some people retire from the Agency. However, there are funding issues. The Agency is considering a partnership with the private sector. Ms. Morgan noted that while the Agency has not specifically considered private sector funding for this project, this type of a collaborative effort is possible. Ms. Morgan also discussed with Ms. Bradley the creation of a methods index. One of the problems with the methods index is that there are a number of methods that are not free. Ms. Morgan noted that this problem can be solved by just directing people to the source of the methods. The FEM will discuss these issues at their next meeting.

Mr. Wyeth suggested that the clearinghouse and the methods index be part of the topics to be discussed with Dr. Grey.

Mr. Wyeth noted that, prior to the next open forum meeting, the workgroups should present to the participants the goals and objectives of each workgroup as well as the types of issues that the workgroups discuss. This is a long-term action item.

Measurement and Technology Work Group

Mr. Lowry noted that the workgroup did not meet last week. He also stated that the workgroup would like the group to identify an issue for the workgroup to work on. Mr. Wyeth asked that ELAB members to think of issues or concerns that need to be addressed.

PENDING AND NEW BUSINESS

Preparation for meeting with Dr. Gray

Regarding the meeting with Dr. Gray, Mr. Wyeth noted that ELAB will submit a briefing document to Dr. Gray prior to the meeting. ELAB will then have a presentation and provide some time for discussion. It is a relatively short meeting, but it is time well spent. The goal of the meeting is to present the items that are of greatest importance to stakeholders involved in NELAP in regards to certification, the actions of the FEM, and homeland security. It is also an opportunity to present to the Agency ELAB's proposed resolutions to issues of concern.

Mr. Wyeth asked ELAB members for suggestions for agenda items. Some of these agenda items include performance approach, the methods index, and the methods clearinghouse. Workgroups should think of other items that should be presented to Dr. Grey. ELAB can also express their support for the FAC on Detection and Quantification. It was noted that the main issues are permits, certification, and homeland security. Mr. Lowry suggested that Mr. Wyeth send an e-mail asking the workgroups to provide ideas about these topics. This should be done before the next Board meeting so that the Board can discuss and finalize these issues at the meeting. Mr. Wyeth indicated that he will send a memo to all ELAB members next week.

TNI update(s)

Mr. Wyeth noted that TNI met in San Antonio recently. At the meeting, TNI elected the Board of Directors and the Executive committee. Mr. Wyeth noted that TNI will be inviting select members of the Federal government to participate in the Board of Directors. It was noted that Federal government representatives will be non-voting members of the Board of Directors. Policies and procedures were also discussed at the meeting.

Web Site Work Group

Mr. Wyeth stated that he had talked to Mr. Banfer about the Web site. He noted that Mr. Banfer's understanding, based on the last meeting with the Web master, was that the EPA Web master would prepare a draft Web site and that the Board or the workgroup would review the draft Web site. Mr. Wyeth stated that the Board is waiting for the draft Web site to be posted, so that it can be reviewed by the Board or a small group of Board members.

Mr. Wyeth also noted that Mr. Banfer is not available at this moment to participate in the Web site workgroup and asked for a volunteer to lead this effort. Mr. Dechant volunteered to lead the Web site workgroup. Mr. Pardue and Ms. Morgan also agreed to help.

Mr. Lowry asked about posting the charter, recent minutes and membership listing. Mr. Wyeth noted that Mr. Banfer believed that the draft Web site was to include all this information. Mr. Lowry indicated that this information should be posted as soon as possible. The Board agreed to request that at a minimum the following information be posted on the Web site: workgroup definitions, recent minutes, issues spreadsheet and membership listing.

FAC on Detection and Quantification

Mr. Wyeth noted that neither Dr. Pletl nor Ms. Thomey were not present at today's meeting. He indicated that the Detection and Quantification Advisory group has been very active. They are currently working on trying to define method quality objectives for use of quantitation limits.

Method update rule

This issue was discussed under the Monitoring Workgroup report.

Issues Spreadsheet

This issue was not discussed during the meeting.

COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

No additional comments or issues were presented.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wyeth adjourned the Board meeting at 3:00 p.m. EST. The next ELAB meeting will take place May 16, 2007.

**AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

April 18, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Conference Call

Call in number: 1-866-299-3188; code 9195415544#

	Topic	Individual Responsible
1	Opening Remarks	DFO
2	Role Call for ELAB Member Introduction of Guests	Chair
3	Approval of or changes to Previous Meeting/Call Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 21, 2007 • February 21, 2007 • Face to Face (January 31, 2007) 	Chair
4	Work Group Correspondence to FEM/Response form EPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of letter - FEM Meeting; Coordination 	Chair All
5	Work Group Reports – Definitions and assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Work Group • Laboratory Management Work Group • Measurement and Technology Work Group 	Chair Morgan Flowers Lowry
6	Pending and New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for meeting with Dr. Gray • TNI update(s) • Web Site Work Group • FAC on Detection and Quantification • Method Update Rule • Issues Spreadsheet <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corrections and/or updates to spreadsheet 2. New issues 	All DFO Banfer/DFO Pletl/Thomey Chair/Pletl All
7	Comments and/or Additional Issues	All
8	Open Discussion and Comments from Guests	All
9	Adjourn/Closing Remarks	Chair/DFO

MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS
ELAB MEETING
April 18, 2007; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Mr. Robert (Bob) K. Wyeth (Chair)	Severn Trent Laboratories Representing: ACIL
Y	Ms. Lara P. Autry, DFO	US Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Mr. Gerald (Gary) Dechant	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. Representing: DOE Analy. Mgmt. Pgm.
N	Mr. Paul Banfer	EISC (Environnemental Info. Sys. Corp.) Representing: Information Systems
N	Mr. James (Jimmy) Jordan	Bechtel Jacobs, Inc. Representing: Large Go's Contractors
N	Ms. Nan Thomey	Environmental Chemistry, Inc. Representing: Small Laboratories
Y	Mr. Rock Vitale	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Third Party Assessors
Y	Mr. Eddie Clemons	Golden Specialty Laboratory Representing: INELA
Y	Mr. Scot Cocanour	Promium Representing: Lab. Customers of Information Technology
Y	Dr. Jeff Flowers	Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Elected Officials for Local Gvt
Y	Dr. Reza Karimi	Southwest Research Institute Representing: Non-profit Research and Development Organizations with Academia
Y	Mr. Jeff Lowry	Environmental Resource Associates Representing: Proficiency Testing Providers
Y	Ms. Judy Morgan	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Env. Lab.
Y	Mr. Joe Pardue	Parallax, Inc. Representing: Clients of QS Services
N	Dr. Jim Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Env. Lab.
N	Dr. Albrecht Schwalm	Oglala Lakota College Representing: Academic & Indian Nations

ACTION ITEMS

1. ELAB members will review the minutes from the March 21, 2007 meeting and send comments/changes to Mr. Wyeth.
2. ELAB members will submit any additional issues or concerns about the methods update rule to Ms. Morgan.
3. Mr. Wyeth will send an e-mail asking the workgroups to provide ideas about topics to be discussed with Dr. Grey. Workgroups will provide their ideas prior to the next Board meeting so that the Board can discuss and finalize these issues at the meeting.
4. The Board requests that at a minimum the following information be posted on the Web site: workgroup definitions, recent minutes, issues spreadsheet and membership listing.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that these are the final version of minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on April 18, 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Wyeth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Signature Chairman

Robert K. Wyeth

Print Name Chairman