SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
June 20, 2012; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EDT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB or Board) teleconference was held on June 20, 2012, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. EDT. The agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A, a list of the participants is provided as Attachment B, and action items from the teleconference are included as Attachment C. The official certification of the minutes by the Chair or Vice-Chair is included as Attachment D.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Patsy Root, Vice-Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests, explaining that ELAB Chair Ms. Aurora Shields had been unable to attend the meeting at the last minute.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Ms. Root asked whether there were comments regarding the May 2012 minutes; there were none. Ms. Judy Morgan moved to accept the minutes, and Dr. Jeff Flowers seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the May minutes with no discussion and no changes.

3. AGENDA FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Ms. Phelps said that she was developing an agenda for ELAB's face-to-face meeting during the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) so that NEMC participants know what discussions will occur during the session. The agenda must be finalized by Friday, June 22, 2012. She highlighted the agenda items from the prior face-to-face meeting, using them as a template for the August 2012 face-to-face meeting agenda. She asked whether the members had any additional items that should be added to the agenda.

Dr. Flowers asked whether a review of the items on which the Board had been working should be included. Ms. Phelps thought that it would be beneficial to add this to the agenda, noting that the Board's activities during the previous 6 months could be highlighted. Ms. Morgan thought that 1 year of activities should be included so that the attendees who were not present at the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in January would receive a full background of the Board's activities since the last NEMC meeting. Ms. Phelps asked how much time should be allocated to such a presentation. The Board members thought that this depended on how much detail was included. Dr. Reza Karimi added that it is his understanding that many of the attendees will be new, so as much background as possible would be helpful. The Board members agreed that 15 minutes would be sufficient for this presentation. Ms. Phelps noted that this left 30 minutes for discussion prior to the break and asked what discussion would fit into this time limit. Dr. Flowers

thought that the Workgroup report-outs could be provided before the break. Ms. Autry asked each Workgroup how much time would be needed. Ms. Root responded that the Monitoring Workgroup could use 15 minutes. Mr. John Phillips reported that he would not know how much time the Measurement and Technology Workgroup would need until after the upcoming discussion on its activities. He suggested that each Workgroup take 10 minutes to provide an overview before the break with full discussion of the activities occurring after the break. This would inform the participants about the activities ELAB is working on and whether they would like to return to the meeting following the break.

In response to a question from Ms. Root, Ms. Phelps explained that the Board has worked on initiatives brought to it as a whole, not started within the workgroups, and also has established *ad hoc* workgroups. If the agenda follows Mr. Phillips' suggestion, then perhaps the *ad hoc* workgroups could provide a report-out following the break. Dr. Flowers said that the Laboratory Management Workgroup would not need a long report-out because its only project is the state of national accreditation. Ms. Phelps asked whether this effort would receive a substantial presentation at the face-to-face meeting. Dr. Flowers thought that the 12-page summary document and the recommendation that the Workgroup is developing could be presented at the meeting.

Mr. Phillips asked about the Method Update Rule (MUR), and Ms. Phelps said that this could be included in the review of the Board's recent activities. Information about the *Ad Hoc* Website Workgroup also could be presented during the review. Ms. Phelps will revise the agenda and send it to the ELAB members prior to the end of the call.

4. GENERAL WORKGROUP ACTIVITY

MUR *Workgroup*

Dr. Michael Wichman reported that Mr. Jerry Parr (The NELAC Institute [TNI]) had drafted a letter to the EPA regarding the MUR. In response to a question from Ms. Root, Ms. Phelps explained that the ELAB members had not discussed the letter, so voting to approve it could not be completed via email. Ms. Root said that discussion of the letter would need to be added to the July 2012 meeting agenda. Dr. Wichman will send the letter to the Board members via email. Dr. Flowers said that the Board could discuss the letter electronically so that it could be approved during the July meeting; the ELAB members and Ms. Phelps agreed to this approach.

Ad Hoc *Website Workgroup*

Ms. Root reported that Ms. Shields had provided the ELAB members with a document outlining the basic structure of the website pages. Ms. Root explained that the website concept and structure were based on the EPA's new website structure. Navigation is consistent on all of the webpages. There is a good deal of text on each webpage, but the information is important and provides the necessary background. The Board members should provide any additional comments to Ms. Root by Wednesday, June 27, 2012.

Monitoring Workgroup

Ms. Root reported that the Monitoring Workgroup had engaged in a productive discussion with Dr. Robin Oshiro (Office of Water [OW]) on June 7, 2012. Dr. Oshiro provided the Workgroup with information regarding the status within the agency of the qPCR method, which currently is undergoing a revision. Guidance for the method is being developed for those laboratories that will adopt qPCR for recreational water monitoring. The Workgroup will attempt to hold a face-to-face meeting with OW during the NEMC meeting. Dr. Wichman added that he had sent a request for information to the Association of Public Health Laboratories environmental laboratory directors. He has received some responses and will compile the information for the Workgroup.

Ms. Root noted that Dr. Julie Kinzelman (Racine Health Department) will be presenting at the NEMC meeting regarding best practices of qPCR. She said that it will be a good opportunity for the ELAB members to hear the issues from a microbiologist so that they know what to address when they next speak to the EPA.

Measurement and Technology Workgroup

Mr. Phillips reported that the Workgroup had met via teleconference with Dr. Maria Gomez-Taylor (OW) and Ms. Jan Matuszko (OW) to discuss the Federal Advisory Committee on Detection and Quantitation (FACDQ) process; the minutes from this meeting were provided to the Board members via email. It was an insightful meeting. The OW staff responded to the questions that the Workgroup had provided them prior to the teleconference. The OW has no budget for detection and quantitation, nor will it in the foreseeable future. The office does not have the funding to study or assign staff to work on the issue. If ELAB provides the OW with a proposal, the office can send it through peer review. It would be easier for the office to approve a method that is similar to that of the proposed FACDQ procedure because of the time and resources already invested in that procedure. Another suggestion that was acceptable to the EPA was to make minor revisions to the current EPA procedures, which are the method detection limit (MDL) and minimum limit (ML). Any proposal would need to undergo a rigorous pilot study with a good cross-section of methods and technologies. The study would need to include a minimum of six laboratories with valid data, and a statistical analysis would need to be performed. The EPA then could review what was generated and determine whether to proceed with the effort. If it proceeds, the next step would be public comment. The OW staff asked whether ELAB is interested in a revised MDL or ML. Mr. Phillips responded from an industry perspective, explaining that industry is interested in a more scientifically rigorous estimate of detection and quantitation. Dr. Richard Burrows said that the laboratory community also has a great interest in this effort. He said that he was confused as to why the EPA was not pursuing the effort given the amount of funding spent and the strong stakeholder input that the agency has received regarding the need for this change.

Dr. Flowers thought that all of these studies had been completed. Mr. Phillips said that the FACDQ had performed a preliminary pilot study with three laboratories and only a few methods. Based on this small study, procedures were adjusted, and the Office of Water was to proceed with a post-FACDQ study. The FAQDC committee thought that its post-FACDQ study would be enough for the EPA to revise the procedure. Dr. Burrows commented that the agency has set the bar high for additional data, and it will be extremely difficult to overcome. A similar effort is ongoing within TNI, and the developed product must be seen as compliant with the MDL; a

different procedure cannot be established within TNI because of the number of rules and regulations that include the MDL. Mr. Phillips agreed that new TNI procedure~~s~~ would need to be completed (including pilot testing) before the EPA would replace the MDL with a new procedure in the regulations. Dr. Burrows said that even if both were used, there would be questions.

Mr. Phillips asked the Board members whether they thought that the MDL needed to be revised based on the thoughts of their constituencies. Dr. Wichman thought that the Board needed to address this issue. Dr. Flowers thought that the current process confuses buyers; there is a great deal of hearsay in the market, and this is a serious issue. He was surprised by the current agency attitude that this is not an important issue, especially considering the amount of time and resources that had been spent on the FACDQ studies. Ms. Root wondered whether there was a good historical understanding within the agency given that the current staff members are new, and there is an interim Assistant Administrator (AA) in OW. Ms. Phelps said that every staff member originally involved with the effort will be retired by the end of June 2012. Mr. Phillips reported that the agency had told the FACDQ members that they would be apprised of any activity within the EPA related to the study, but the members did not receive any updates, even following requests for information. Ms. Matuszko and Dr. Gomez-Taylor had indicated to Mr. Phillips that any progress on this issue would need to be made at a higher level. One potential next step could be for the Board to bring this issue to higher personnel in OW. Dr. Karimi thought that additional inputs and opinion could be gathered at the face-to-face meeting in August. Ms. Root said that this could be done during new business. Mr. Phillips noted that Dr. Burrows would be giving a presentation on the post-FACDQ pilot study on Wednesday during the NEMC meeting, and the Workgroup could develop a presentation to introduce the topic to the public during the ELAB session. Ms. Phelps said that Dr. Mike Shapiro (Acting AA of OW) will be the first speaker on Wednesday morning.

Mr. Phillips added that after the OW staff left the Workgroup call, the Workgroup discussed the data quality objectives (DQO) issue. The Workgroup is trying to determine whether the OW has a clearly defined procedure to include a DQO process within its decision-making process, but it does not appear that a procedure is in place. The OW relies on current methodologies and quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) ~~of~~ criteria within these methods. As long the QA/QC criteria are met, then the DQOs are considered met. This means that reliance is placed on the fact that the methods are rigorous enough to meet data needs. The Workgroup plans to examine rules that have been promulgated. Ms. Mary Kelly (OW) had told Mr. Phillips that the OW follows an open process, and it is possible to determine how the office has followed the DQO process by examining dockets for rules and guidelines that the office has set. The Workgroup will meet at the NEMC meeting and plans to continue meeting via email for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Flowers asked whether the objective was to define the DQOs that the OW used to establish the methods. Mr. Phillips responded that this was the case, and Workgroup members will share the work and then determine whether the Board should follow up with the OW on the topic. The Workgroup members discussed the possibility of meeting with Dr. Shapiro during lunch after the Wednesday morning session. Ms. Phelps stated that there would be a sponsored lunch with a speaker on Wednesday. Dr. Burrows said that regardless of who serves as the speaker, he would like to meet with Dr. Shapiro to discuss the issues. Ms. Phelps will determine whether Dr. Shapiro would be amenable to meeting with a small group of ELAB members on Wednesday during NEMC to discuss the detection and quantitation issue as well as the DQO issue.

Laboratory Management Workgroup

The Laboratory Management Workgroup's main focus is the health of national accreditation, which the Board discussed as a current action needing update/review.

5. CURRENT ACTIONS NEEDING UPDATE/REVIEW

Dr. Flowers explained that the Laboratory Management Workgroup had developed a recommendation summary to the EPA regarding the state of national accreditation based on the 12-page summary document on which the Board has been working. The 12-page summary document also was sent to the members with editorial comments that need to be addressed.

Dr. Flowers asked Ms. Kristen LeBaron (SCG, Inc.) to lead the discussion regarding her editorial comments. Ms. Morgan had produced the 12-page summary document by compiling the information that the Board members had provided to her regarding their stakeholders' input. The Board members discussed the editorial comments, and Ms. LeBaron made the changes that the ELAB members suggested directly into the document. Ms. Morgan and Ms. LeBaron will work together to finalize the summary document and send it to the ELAB members via email.

The Board members will send Dr. Flowers comments about the recommendation letter via email by Wednesday, June 27, 2012. The Board members working on this issue will send to Dr. Flowers via email their availability to participate in a conference call to discuss the national accreditation recommendation letter.

6. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Board members did not introduce any new topics or issues for consideration.

7. UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Ms. Phelps noted that the membership packages are undergoing the second round of reviews and should be approved in time for the membership change in October 2012.

8. OTHER ITEMS

Mr. Phillips asked about publishing ancillary documents on the ELAB website; he would like the Measurement and Technology Workgroup minutes from the June 2012 teleconference with the OW published with the minutes from this Board meeting. Ms. Root said that the Workgroup minutes would be published to the Workgroup's page with the regular disclaimer that they are not approved by the full Board.

9. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

Ms. LeBaron reviewed the action items from the meeting, which are included in Attachment C.

10. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Determining that there were no more issues to discuss, Ms. Root asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Morgan made the motion, which Dr. Flowers seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
June 20, 2012; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Opening Remarks	Phelps/Shields
Approval of May Minutes	Shields
Agenda for Face-to-Face Meeting	Shields
General Workgroup Activity	
Ad Hoc Website Workgroup	Shields/Root
Monitoring Workgroup	Root
Measurement/Technology Workgroup	Phillips
Laboratory Management Workgroup	Flowers
Current Actions Needing Update/Review	
State of National Accreditation	Morgan/Speis
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Shields
Updates From the DFO	Phelps
Other Items	All
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Shields
Closing Remarks/Adjourn	Phelps/Shields

Attachment B

MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS

ELAB TELECONFERENCE
June 20, 2012; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
N	Ms. Aurora Shields (Chair)	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
Y	Ms. Patsy Root (Vice-Chair)	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Lara P. Phelps, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Dr. Richard Burrows	TestAmerica Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Commercial Laboratory Industry
Y	Mr. Eddie Clemons, II	Practical Quality Consulting Services Representing: Clients of QS Services
N	Mr. John (Jack) E. Farrell, III	Analytical Excellence, Inc. Representing: The NELAC Institute (TNI)
Y	Dr. Jeff Flowers	City of Maitland, Florida Representing: Elected Officials of Local Government
Y	Dr. Reza Karimi	Battelle Memorial Institute Representing: Nonprofit Research and Development Organizations
Y	Dr. H. M. (Skip) Kingston	Duquesne University Representing: Government Consortiums, Native Americans and Academia
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) S. Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third Party Assessors
Y	Ms. Judith (Judy) R. Morgan	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Environmental Laboratories
Y	Mr. John H. Phillips	Ford Motor Company Representing: Alliance of Auto Manufacturers
Y	Dr. James (Jim) Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Environmental Laboratories
Y	Mr. David (Dave) N. Speis	QC Laboratories Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL)
Y	Ms. Michelle L. Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
Y	Dr. Michael D. Wichman	University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Ms. Lynn Bradley (Guest)	TNI
Y	Ms. Paula Hogg (Guest)	Hampton Roads Sanitation District
Y	Mr. Stuart Magoon (Guest)	City of Takoma Environmental Services Laboratory

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the May 2012 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.

2. Ms. Phelps will revise the agenda for the August 2012 face-to-face meeting and send it to the Board members prior to the end of the teleconference.

3. A discussion of the MUR letter will be added to the July 2012 meeting agenda.

4. Dr. Wichman will send the MUR letter that Mr. Parr drafted to the ELAB members so that they can discuss it via email prior to the July meeting.

5. The Board members will send Ms. Root comments about the new ELAB website via email by Wednesday, June 27, 2012.

6. Ms. Phelps will determine whether Dr. Shapiro would be amenable to meeting with a small group of ELAB members on Wednesday during NEMC to discuss the detection and quantitation issue as well as the DQO issue.

7. Ms. Morgan and Ms. LeBaron will work together to finalize the summary document on the state of national accreditation and send it to the ELAB members via email.

8. The Board members will send Dr. Flowers comments about the recommendation letter regarding the state of national accreditation via email by Wednesday, June 27, 2012.

9. The Board members working on the state of national accreditation will send to Dr. Flowers via email their availability to participate in a conference call to discuss the national accreditation recommendation letter.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on June 20, 2012.

Aurora Shields

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Signature Chair

Mrs. Aurora Shields

Print Name Chair