SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
September 16, 2015; 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 September 16, 2015. 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.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Patty Carvajal, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests.

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE DFO

Ms. Phelps explained that she has been updating information about ELAB (e.g., members, number of meetings, online location of meeting minutes) in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) database; the updated information must be entered by the end of this week. Board members may receive a survey about the database. Once the updated information has been approved and populated, Ms. Phelps will send the ELAB members the link to the database.

Ms. Phelps will be meeting with other DFOs this week in Washington, D.C. The FACA attorney that Ms. Phelps has worked with has decided to retire, so there may be changes moving forward with the new attorney.

Ms. Phelps announced that Mr. Keith Greenaway had resigned from the Board the previous day for unknown reasons. With only 11 members left on the Board, Ms. Phelps noted the need for ELAB to prioritize its topics and work on those that the members are most passionate about. The focus should continue to be on quality products versus quantity.

Ms. Carvajal wondered how to move forward without a liaison to The NELAC Institute (TNI). Ms. Phelps explained that many of the members have relationships with TNI and can contact the organization as necessary; she informed Mr. Jerry Parr (TNI) that morning that ELAB no longer had a TNI representative. In response to a question from Ms. Carvajal, Ms. Phelps explained that Mr. Parr did not appear to be aware of Mr. Greenaway's resignation.

The new membership process will begin next month to determine the composition of the next Board. Four current members (Ms. Patsy Root, Ms. Aurora Shields, Ms. Michelle Wade and Ms. Silky Labie) currently are serving their third and final term per FACA rules. The upcoming membership process will be particularly important given the impending loss of the three-term members and the recent Board attrition. ELAB members who have suggestions about potential members may contact Ms. Phelps; the potential membership should be in place by April 2016 to ensure that the approval process, which includes the EPA Administrator and the White House liaison to EPA, is completed by September 2016.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

Ms. Carvajal asked whether any members had comments regarding the Board's August meeting minutes; there were none. Ms. Root moved to accept the minutes, and Ms. Shields seconded the motion. ELAB approved the August minutes unanimously with no discussion and one abstention.

UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Methods Harmonization

In Dr. Dallas Wait's absence, Ms. Shields provided an update for the group, which has developed and completed comparative tables for various methods. The group will be reviewing them for accuracy. Once this is accomplished, most likely prior to the next ELAB meeting, the Task Group will draft a letter to the Forum on Environmental Measurements with its recommendations. The completed tables will be attached to the letter as examples. Once the Board approves and sends the letter, the Task Group will continue to communicate with the Agency about any progress on methods harmonization. The Task Group recognizes that the Agency already has initiated some harmonization efforts. Ms. Carvajal thanked the Task Group members for the significant time and effort that they have put into this project.

Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF)/Data Quality Objective (DQO) Process

Dr. Henry Leibovitz explained that laboratories have expressed their frustration with not being involved enough in the DQO process and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) development. Constructive ideas regarding this topic were provided at the Board's most recent face-to-face meeting. A follow-up discussion with Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy), who serves on the IDQTF, is needed to better understand how laboratories can be included earlier. Dr. Leibovitz was unsure how much additional progress ELAB could make in this area, noting that many commercial laboratories have acknowledged that it is their responsibility to establish relationships with environmental engineering firms so that they are involved earlier in the process. Perhaps Dr. Adelson could provide ideas about how ELAB can help to promote laboratory involvement in the DQO process. Ms. Carvajal agreed. Dr. Leibovitz will determine whether ELAB can take additional action by the Board's next face-to-face meeting.

Ms. Kitty Kong thought that Dr. Adelson could help the Task Group develop a communication plan to improve interaction between laboratories and environmental engineering firms during the process. Publicizing the appropriate point of contact within the Agency for laboratories to approach regarding this issue also would help laboratories engage in the process. Dr. Leibovitz noted part of the challenge is that EPA and the U.S. Department of Defense contract environmental engineering firms, which then contract laboratories; there is not a direct connection between the federal agencies and the laboratories. He thought that Dr. Adelson might be able to connect the Task Group with those responsible for contacting the firms and help ensure that language is included in environmental engineering firms' contracts that indicates that laboratories must be involved early in the DQO process and QAPP development. Dr. Adelson also can determine to whom any ELAB recommendations should be addressed.

Qualification of Drinking Water Data

Ms. Carvajal reported that the Task Group had met via teleconference, and Ms. Aaren Alger (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection) will attend the group's next teleconference. At a separate meeting the prior Monday, Ms. Alger had indicated that Pennsylvania's new qualification process had increased the amount of work for the department, but the process has been streamlined since its implementation.

Dr. Leibovitz asked whether guests could attend the Task Group's next teleconference because the Association of Public Health Laboratories is interested in this topic, so he would be interested in attending and reporting back to the organization. Ms. Carvajal indicated that the Task Group already has a quorum. Ms. Phelps can arrange a public meeting, announced in the *Federal Register*, so that more ELAB members could attend if Ms. Alger is comfortable presenting to a larger group. Alternatively, Ms. Alger could be invited to speak at the Board's October meeting. Given the timeframe for announcing a public meeting, the Board decided to invite Ms. Alger to present at its October meeting.

Ms. Phelps explained that the Board's comments/recommendations on this topic would be sent to the EPA staff members present at the Chicago luncheon with ELAB, with Mr. Dan Hautman (EPA) as the lead. Ms. Carvajal stated that the goal was to send ELAB's comments and any recommendations by the Board's next face-to-face meeting.

Dr. Mike Delaney asked about companies that provide validation software for automated data review. Ms. Labie responded that Laboratory Data Consultants, Inc., is contracted in the state of Florida to provide validation. At one point, the software was complimentary, but the technical assistance was fee-based. This may have changed in the 6 years since Ms. Labie left the department, but she believes that a demonstration copy may be available. Dr. Leibovitz added that Computer Sciences Corporation also has programs that provide data-checking, although he is unsure whether the company provides commercial services.

Dr. Delaney commented that he had read and liked the state of Florida's document regarding data review.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

In Mr. Michael Flournoy's absence, Ms. Kong provided the update for the Task Group, which met recently. The Office of Air has requirements in place regarding air emission analyzers, and Mr. Lem Walker (EPA) has provided information about pilot demonstrations for water. The Task Group will be meeting again to develop recommendations based on the new information.
Ms. Phelps indicated that any recommendations should be sent to the same staff members who met with ELAB at the Chicago luncheon, with Ms. Janet Goodwin (EPA) as the key recipient rather than Mr. Hautman.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)/Acrolein and Acrylonitrile

Dr. Mahesh Pujari stated that Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) is the lead for the project at the Agency, and he has been out of contact since the last ELAB meeting; therefore, there is nothing new to report on this topic.

PROPOSED TASK GROUP STRUCTURE POLICY FOR ELAB

During the previous ELAB meeting, Ms. Carvajal had suggested that the Task Groups change each January, but she has since reconsidered because the Board holds a face-to-face meeting during that month. The proposed structure is to establish three Task Group focus areas: technology, policy and methodology. ELAB members would rotate among the three Task Groups each year, with a balance of first-, second- and third-term members serving in each group, so that membership on these Task Groups would not be permanent and satisfy FACA rules. The Technology Task Group would focus on new technologies, the Policy Task Group would focus on items such as the Method Update Rule, and the Methodology Workgroup would focus on methods.

Dr. Leibovitz thought that certain technology issues also could fall under methodology; changing the name of the "Methodology" group to "Method Review" or something similar could reduce any confusion about which topics should be included in which topic area. He liked the proposed structure but wondered how each group would decide that it had too many tasks to address effectively. He was also concerned that Task Group members would not be able to work on topics of interest outside of their assigned group.

Dr. Delaney thought that, based on the number of members currently serving on the Board, the Task Groups should continue as they have been, with the proposed structure being implemented when ELAB membership changes in October 2016. Dr. Leibovitz agreed that the structure could continue as is, with the current and any new topics introduced being assigned to these focus areas, so that when the new Board commences, the focus areas are already populated with topics/projects.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dr. Delaney was contacted by a colleague who had expressed frustration regarding the way states deal with cyanide issues within drinking water. Dr. Delaney recommended that the colleague contact ELAB through the website. Mr. Hautman responded immediately, and Dr. Delaney was impressed with the timeliness of the response. He asked about the process for submitting topics specifically to ELAB. Ms. Phelps responded that the new Environmental Measurement Website, of which ELAB is a part, has been successful and received international recognition. As a result, she has received a substantial number of inquiries from interested parties, and she is responsible for disseminating the inquiries as appropriate. An inquiry must specifically state that it is for ELAB for Ms. Phelps to forward it directly to the Board. The cyanide inquiry did not mention ELAB, so she forwarded it to the appropriate EPA staff member. Ms. Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky (EPA) reiterated that the Web developers only allowed one "Contact Us" form for the Environmental Measurements Website, so the Board no longer has a separate, dedicated contact form.

Dr. Delaney asked about the differences between the summer and winter conferences and how they affect the included ELAB sessions. Ms. Phelps said that the winter conference is completely focused on environmental accreditation and has an attendance of about one-third that of the summer conference. The community as a whole at the winter meeting concentrates its focus on a national environmental accreditation program for laboratories and fieldwork. The ELAB session

generally is allotted less time during the winter conference. The Board will have at least 2 hours during its next face-to-face meeting. If ELAB has a full agenda and can justify a longer meeting, Ms. Phelps can discuss this with Mr. Parr.

WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Kristen LeBaron reviewed the action items identified during the meeting, which are included as Attachment C.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Leibovitz moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Labie seconded the motion. The Board approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
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Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Carvajal/LeBaron
Opening Remarks From the DFO	Phelps
Approval of August Minutes	Carvajal
Updates on Current Topics	All
Methods Harmony: Wait	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives Process: Leibovitz	
Qualification of Drinking Water Data: Carvajal	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Polychlorinated Biphenyls/Acrolein and Acrylonitrile: Pujari	
Proposed Task Group Structure Policy for ELAB	Carvajal
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Carvajal
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Carvajal/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Carvajal

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS LIST

Board Members

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal (Chair)	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
N	Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Vice-Chair)	Gradient Corporation Representing: Consumer Products Industry
Y	Ms. Lara Phelps, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Representing: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
N	Mr. Michael Flournoy	Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
Y	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third-Party Assessors
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
Y	Dr. Mahesh Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
Y	Ms. Patsy Root	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
N	Ms. Michelle Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies

PARTICIPANTS LIST (CONT)

Contractors and Guests

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Ms. Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky (EPA ASPPH Fellow)	EPA

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

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

2. Ms. Phelps will send the ELAB members the link to the FACA database once the updated information has been approved and published.

3. Dr. Leibovitz will follow up with Dr. Adelson of the IDQTF and, by the Board's next face-to-face meeting, determine whether ELAB can take additional action regarding laboratory involvement in the DQO process.

4. The Board will invite Ms. Alger to present at its October meeting.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on September 16, 2015.

Signature Chair

Ms. Patricia M. Carvajal

Print Name Chair