

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Teleconference  
May 16, 2007; 1:00 – 3:25 PM EDT**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) meeting was held via regular teleconference on May 16, 2007 from 1:00 – 3:25 PM EDT. The original 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 E.

**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. Mr. Joe Pardue mentioned during the roll call that his affiliation had changed. He will send his new contact information to Ms. Autry.

There were no guests that participated in the call.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO PREVIOUS MEETING/CALL MINUTES**

Minutes from April 18, 2007 Meeting—Mr. Wyeth noted that the minutes have been provided to the group. He noticed an error on the attendance page and requested that everyone check over the minutes and reply. There are also a couple of places in the body of the minutes where speakers were unable to be identified. Please look for those places and see if you can attribute any comments.

No other corrections were noted.

March 21, 2007 Meeting—Mr. Wyeth said that he had not received any comments or corrections on these minutes. Dr. Karimi noted that the meeting with Dr. Gray is referred to in the minutes as taking place on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wyeth will check that and get it corrected. No other comments or corrections have been received so they are considered final with that one correction.

**WORK GROUP CORRESPONDENCE TO FEM/RESPONSE FORM EPA**

Mr. Wyeth requested that the group table this discussion until the next meeting in order to focus on the preparations for the meeting with Dr. Gray. The group concurred.

**WORK GROUP REPORTS – DEFINITIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

These discussions were tabled until the next meeting.

**PENDING AND NEW BUSINESS**

All agenda items unrelated to preparation for the meeting with Dr. Gray were tabled until future meetings.

*Preparation for meeting with Dr. Gray*

Mr. Wyeth explained that he had taken the minutes and notes that the group had provided and cut and pasted them into a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment D). Although he participated in some of the calls, there is still a lot of work to be done to complete the presentation.

Mr. Wyeth expressed his concerns that the presentation is not ready on multiple levels. He noted that the presentation is not appropriate for the audience that they are trying to reach; that is Dr. Gray, a high level Scientific Advisor at EPA. On the other hand, the information is too specific and getting into the weeds rather than being at a higher level. He also mentioned that he had received an email from Ms. Autry with similar concerns about the presentation and the group's level of preparation for the meeting.

Mr. Wyeth outlined some specific suggestions to change the presentation:

- Address areas of concern to Agency leadership such as Agency policy, consistency and effectiveness, and quality of data
- Talk about what the group does with FEM
- Address the Performance Approach
- Much of the content should remain the same, but as sub-points to broader issues and categories.
- Talk more about how ELAB can be a resource to EPA.

Ms. Morgan asked for more specific explanation of what Mr. Wyeth means when saying that the group needs to talk to Dr. Gray at a higher level. She also pointed out that she had sent an email to Dr. Gray requesting more open lines of communications.

It was suggested that the group look at the headings on the slides and determining a few higher level ideas in which to categorize the other bulleted points.

The group discussed how to determine what goals Dr. Gray would have for this briefing and how to communicate with him based on those goals.

Ms. Nan Thomey (Environmental Chemistry, Inc.) suggested changing the title on each slide from "EPA briefing" to the broad policy issue to be addressed with the particular slide and then reorganize the other points into those broad categories.

Mr. Wyeth agreed, but pointed out that the group first needs to determine what topics to address with Dr. Gray. How can ELAB effectively provide information to the Agency? He indicated that he expects that what Dr. Gray wants to hear is how that can affect the higher goals and objectives that he has at his desk.

Ms. Autry explained that she had sent an email to Mr. Wyeth expressing her concerns about the group's lack of preparation for the meeting with Dr. Gray. She wants to make sure that the group is all on the same page in preparing for the meeting or it may need to be cancelled or postponed. Dr. Gray has no confusion about what issues ELAB is chartered to advise on. He's been briefed and reminded recently of all those issues. He's very sharp and he knows what's happening and what's going on. There's no mystery as to what areas he expects to get information from the group on. She indicated that ELAB has a specific charter of work in which to provide thoughts and advice to the Agency on. The group does not need to worry beyond the scope of the charter.

Ms. Judy Morgan (Environmental Science Corp.) explained that at the onset she had a diff idea of what was to be expected of the group. It seems that Dr. Gray is at a level that he has interest in areas that ELAB also has interest in. This is a meeting about the policy goals that ELAB has an interest in, as does he. She noted that ELAB wants to be partners with open lines of communications so that we can be effective. She indicated that it does not appear that the group has a good foothold on who we need to talk to about the different issues that we are concerned with. ELAB needs to be effective and bring issues to him, but also want to know how to actually address the issue (i.e. who to talk to about specific issues).

Dr. Jim Pletl (Hampton Roads Sanitation District) compared his experience with other Federal Advisory Committees, in particular the Detection and Quantitation FAC. The big difference is that there is an open line of communication both at the workgroup level and with individual members. For example, someone from EPA could call Dr. Pletl and talk about the specific issues, and that doesn't happen in connection with the Agency on ELAB. It's a two way issue, and we want to make sure that when we're providing recommendation that we're working on the right thing and that we'll get a response back fairly quickly.

Ms. Autry added to the discussion on this issue. She agreed with that characterization; however she pointed out that it is important to recognize that there is a huge difference between Detection and Quantitation, which was put together with one sole goal and accomplishment, and ELAB which is designed towards a long-term goal. This FACA has a history that many never maintain because of the longevity and ability to focus. This group has a tremendous impact that you probably don't even realize. ELAB can definitely work on the communication and improving feedback, but there is a very different set up with this group than with those other FACAs. ELAB needs to have a relationship with the Science Advisor, regardless of who is filling that role. There are issues that stay around the Agency forever and those people who sit in Dr. Gilman and Dr. Gray's seat change and they need the people like ELAB members to be able to fill them in on those things, so that they may be the one to finally help fix that problem or that issue.

Ms. Thomey raised the issue of how long Dr. Gray will remain in that position. Ms. Autry replied that those types of position change with various other situations, but however long that person will be there, the ELAB brings continuity and should maintain communication and a relationship.

The group agreed to create three to four upper level categories with which to categorize the elements from the slides. In the process it will be determined whether the subject falls under the purview of the group or whether it should be left out.

Mr. Gary Dechant (Analytical Quality Associates, Inc.) proposed the categories below:

1. conduit of information with the agency
2. technical support conduit
3. promotion and/or lab accreditation

Mr. Wyeth pointed out that the initial letter to Dr. Gray explained exactly what the group wants to talk to him about, all the things on the rough agenda are those same things. So he proposed changing the presentation to fit with the items outlined in the letter.

Mr. Dechant suggested taking the slide on the method update rule, the FACA slide and the Environmental Communication lab slide, and move them to the end to use as examples, then everything else falls into the three categories that were in the letter to Dr. Gray.

The group went through the presentation slide by slide and categorized them and rearranged them accordingly. The revised slides are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Wyeth offered to implement the discussed changes and share the revised document to that everyone could review it and make additional suggestions.

In addition to revising the organization and content of the presentation, the group discussed how to address the issue of EPA support for the FAC in the meeting with Dr. Gray. They discussed whether to include it on a slide in the presentation and how to discuss the topic in the meeting. The group feels that it is important to bring up the issue without asking for too much. Mr. Jimmy Jordan pointed out that

historically the only support has been for conference calls and scribes. As a result, some of the group members have not been able to attend meetings due to the travel costs. He suggested requesting funding for those in public sector jobs, such as municipalities, so that they would be able to attend the face-to-face meetings as well.

Ms. Autry agreed that, while it would be nice to be able to fund everyone, it was most important to start with requesting funding for at least those (like municipalities) who have more limited resources and are therefore unable to attend meetings.

#### Attendance at the briefing meeting

Dr. Jeff Flowers asked who would be going to the meeting with Dr. Gray. Mr. Wyeth replied that, assuming Lara wants to move forward it would be himself, Ms. Autry, Mr. Pardue, Dr. Karimi, and possibly Mr. Clemons. He confirmed that Mr. Pletl and Dr. Schwalm were unable to attend.

Ms. Autry explained that all members of the group are welcome to attend if they are able; they just need to let her know so she can provide a list of names and a head count to get in the building. She will send out all the logistics information about the meeting. She also explained the security measures the participants will need to go through, particularly in regards to laptops etc, in order to get into the offices.

Ms. Autry commended the group for their hard work on revising the presentation, but told them that there was still a lot to do to have it ready for the meeting. She said that she needs to feel comfortable that they are properly prepared or else she will need to reschedule the meeting. She would like to see a final presentation by Monday at noon, to be able to move forward with the meeting as planned. The whole group working together should be able to make this happen, but one person alone taking on the responsibility cannot be successful. She also offered that the conference call line will be available for the group to use as needed anytime within that time frame.

Ms. Autry had to leave the call at 3:10 but the workgroup continued its discussion. They discussed how to interpret her concerns and how they could address them more fully. They were concerned about the possibility of the meeting being canceled at this late date when several had already made travel arrangements. To further address the concerns, the group decided to move forward with the revisions to the presentation which they had already worked out, and to have another conference call to finalize those changes and make additional edits in a working session.

The working call was scheduled for Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11 am (eastern time). Mr. Wyeth will send out details to the whole group and will use his conference call line which allows for web-conferencing. This will allow the group to work together on the presentation and see the changes in real time.

#### **COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

No additional comments or issues were presented.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Wyeth adjourned the Board meeting at 3:25 p.m. EST.

**AGENDA  
for  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**May 16, 2007: 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

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

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Individual Responsible</b>
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"> <li>• April 18, 2007</li> <li>• March 21, 2007</li> </ul>	Chair
4	Work Group Correspondence to FEM/Response form EPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Approach</li> <li>- Preparation for FEM Meeting in July</li> </ul>	Chair All
5	Work Group Reports – Definitions and assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Work Group</li> <li>• Laboratory Management Work Group</li> <li>• Measurement and Technology Work Group</li> </ul>	Chair Morgan Flowers Lowry
6	Pending and New Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for meeting with Dr. Gray</li> <li>• TNI update(s)</li> <li>• Web Site Work Group</li> <li>• FAC on Detection and Quantification</li> <li>• Method Update Rule</li> <li>• Issues Spreadsheet <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corrections and/or updates to spreadsheet</li> <li>2. New issues</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	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**

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
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
Y	Ms. Nan Thomey	Environmental Chemistry, Inc. Representing: Small Laboratories
N	Mr. Rock Vitale	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Third Party Assessors
Y	Mr. Eddie Clemons	Golden Specialty Laboratory Representing: INELA
N	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
Y	Dr. Jim Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Env. Lab.
Y	Dr. Albrecht Schwalm	Oglala Lakota College Representing: Academic & Indian Nations

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. Mr. Wyeth will implement the discussed changes to the presentation and share the revised document to that everyone could review it and make additional suggestions.
2. Mr. Wyeth will arrange a spiderphone conference call for the whole group on Friday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. eastern time to work on finalizing the presentation.

## Attachment D



Attachment E

I hereby certify that these are the final version of minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on May 16, 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RatK Wyeth", with a large, loopy initial "R" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Signature Chairman

Robert K. Wyeth

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Print Name Chairman