

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference
May 21, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) meeting was held via regular teleconference on May 21, 2008 from 1:00 – 3:00 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 D.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Pletl welcomed board members and guests and took a roll call of the Board.

No guests participated in the call.

AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO PREVIOUS MEETING/CALL MINUTES

It was discussed and decided upon that Mr. Eddie Clemons name would be removed from the membership list of all future minutes, as he is no longer a member of ELAB.

Minutes from the Board's last meeting on April 16, 2008 were approved by Board members.

PROFICIENCY TESTING DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Pletl introduced the topic of Proficiency Testing and mentioned that they need to resolve the issue of who from ELAB would be serving on TNI's special working group. Mr. Lowry commented that he thought this was already resolved during the past meetings, that Dr. Karimi, Mr. Dechant, and he would be the ELAB members participating. To this, Dr. Flowers suggested that the three ELAB chairs should sit on the committee. He expressed Dan Tholen's receptiveness to this idea, and reminded the Board that everyone can sit in on the TNI Subcommittee meetings as associate members. Discussion about participation and the roles of ELAB members in the subcommittee followed. Mr. Dechant offered to give up his position to Dr. Flowers so that the three chairs could be the three voting members of the TNI Subcommittee. There was a majority opinion that the three ELAB Working Group Chairs should be the ELAB representatives to the special subcommittee. It was also proposed that Dr. Pletl should contact Dan Tholen and to inform him of this decision while reiterating that those individuals involved will not be officially representing ELAB, that their involvement is purely a means of improving communication.

CHROMIUM HOLDING TIME

Dr. Pletl shared with the Board that he has received correspondence from Ms. Yang and Dick Reding in regards to this issue. They are in the midst of conducting a study to determine whether the holding time differences can be resolved and will review data later this summer. Mr. Vitale commented that one would assume the Office of Water would not have made that change without sufficient technical data to support their decision. He also asked whether it was reasonable to assume that the Office of Water provided that information the Office of Solid Waste and it wasn't enough. Dr. Flowers added that it was his understanding that, under the new rule, in order to extend the holding time, a sample would have to be buffered between a fairly narrow pH range. Mr. Vitale agreed that it would have to be made slightly basic. Mr. Vitale also suggested that all of the technical problems and chemistry issues should have already been asked and answered by the Office of Water. He shared his hopes that they are not going back to the drawing board and starting over without seeing the benefits of the Office of Water's work. To this, Dr. Pletl explained that it is referred to as an "ongoing study," but also offered to go back to the authors and ask whether all of the information from the Office of Water has been provided to the Office of Solid Waste and try to tease out what they actually mean by "study."

OSW AND SW846

Mr. Dechant introduced this issue, commenting that he has observed that the Office of Solid Waste has reissued Update 4 (pretty much all of the methods) but have not changed any of the letter codes or revision numbers. Now there are several fairly different methods with the same method and revision number. Mr. Dechant went on to say that there seemed to be a trend in issuing an update to a method without updating or changing the revision number which might raise an issue with accreditation. It didn't appear that the Office of Solid Waste is particularly concerned over this issue.

Mr. Vitale agreed that this practice leads to compatibility issues and chaos. To this, Dr. Flowers asked what ELAB can do to help the situation. It was suggested by Mr. Cocanour that if they understood better what labs would gain by changing the name/number, they might be able to better tailor a response.

Ms. Autry commented that this naming confusion seems to only be an issue within the Office of Solid Waste and suggested that ELAB write to Dr. Gray and forward that note to the Office of Solid Waste. It was agreed that ELAB would be within their charter in doing so and that it is an issue that ELAB should respond to. The Board suggested that the Laboratory Management Work Group draft something to send to Dr. Gray in response to this issue.

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Dr. Pletl opened the discussion up to work groups for updates.

The Monitoring Work Group tried to meet but there was a mix up and they have not gotten together yet, and as such, had no news to report. The Laboratory Management Work Group and the Measurement and Technology Work Group also had nothing new to discuss, as they haven't met this past month.

NEMC CHALLENGE TO ATTENDEES

Dr. Pletl thanked Dr. Flowers for putting together some language for the NEMC challenge to attendees and emailing it to the Board.

Mr. Wyeth shared that he was able to move the Organics Section meeting to a time that will no longer be in conflict with the ELAB meeting.

Ms. Autry, Dr. Flowers, and Mr. Wyeth discussed the language and timing of the NEMC challenge email that will be distributed to attendees and decided that some finessing is needed in the wording and that it should be finalized by the June ELAB meeting and reexamined.

COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Mr. Dechant commented that, at the TECQ meeting, it appeared that the FEM is setting up a work group to reevaluate calibration models. He asked if that was something ELAB could get information on since it might be of interest to the measurement group. To this, Ms. Autry replied that she could always share such information with the Board and then offered to quickly cover the FEM's agenda for their upcoming June 4 meeting.

Ms. Autry began by sharing that the FEM will have a new Co-Chair, George Padlou, who will be taking over for Kathy Callahan who has recently retired. His first meeting with the FEM will be on June 4.

Ms. Autry also informed the Board members that they have an item on the agenda of the Science Policy Council that has been progressing well and receiving positive feedback.

Ms. Autry then shared that their most recent document in response to method validation work, especially with microbiologicals, is about to be reviewed. They also have the biological document underway, with the sampling component coming soon.

In regards to method detection and quantitation, things have been moving forward now that the FAC on Detection and Quantitation has written their report. The FEM has formally formed their action team and had their second meeting last week. Ms. Autry explained how they have made a huge leap forward by recognizing what differences all of the programs offices have from a needs standpoint as well as what they do today. She commented that they will now be able to create a road map that the Agency has never had before.

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Mr. Wyeth then asked Ms. Autry whether she had any information about the status of the EPA detection/quantitation pilot study. She answered that, while she knows they made the necessary revisions they needed before the launch of the program, she was unsure of when it would actually start up. Mr. Lowry added that he heard from Dick Reding that it would be in a matter of months.

Ms. Autry informed the Board members that the FEM formed a work group to examine how severe the calibration problem was across the Agency. They have since put together a white paper to be presented to the FEM in which they recommend working on this issue under the Improving Agency Methods Action Team.

Mr. Wyeth then asked whether the new EPA Chief Scientist will be present at the NEMC meeting. Ms. Autry answered that, yes, she would be there as well as facilitating the entire morning session on Wednesday along with herself. The new Chief Scientist will also be coming to ELAB's meeting that Monday.

Dr. Flowers brought up a question in regards to TNI's sampling standard and whether there is anything ELAB could do to help grow or foster the use of it. He shared that he got the impression from TNI that it's just sitting there, with nothing happening. Ms. Autry answered that she didn't think the accrediting bodies in place currently were prepared or ready to implement that piece of an air program.

ADJOURN/CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Pletl adjourned the Board meeting at 2:18 p.m. EST.

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Attachment A

**AGENDA
for
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

May 21, 2008; 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	Roll Call for ELAB Members Introduction of Guests	Chair
3	Review and approval of meeting minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 16, 2008	All
4	Proficiency Testing Discussions	All
5	Chromium holding time	Chair
6	OSW and SW846	Dechant
7	Work Group Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring Work Group• Laboratory Management Work Group• Measurement and Technology Work Group	Chair Morgan Flowers Lowry
8	NEMC challenge to attendees for questions	Flowers, Wyeth
9	Comments and/or Additional Issues	All
10	Open Discussion and Comments from Guests	All
11	Review Action Items and Assignments	Chair
12	Adjourn/Closing Remarks	Chair/DFO

MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS**ELAB MEETING****May 21, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Dr. Jim Pletl (Chair)	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Env. Lab.
Y	Mr. Robert (Bob) K. Wyeth	Columbia Analytical Services, Inc. Representing: ACIL
Y	Ms. Lara P. Autry, DFO	US Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
N	Mr. Paul Banfer	EISC (Environnemental Info. Sys. Corp.) Representing: Information Systems
Y	Mr. Scot Cocanour	Promium Representing: Lab. Customers of Information Technology
Y	Mr. Gerald (Gary) Dechant	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. Representing: DOE Analy. Mgmt. Pgm.
Y	Dr. Jeff Flowers	Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Elected Officials for Local Govt
N	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
N	Ms. Judy Morgan	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Env. Lab.
Y	Mr. Joe Pardue	Parallax, Inc. Representing: Clients of QS Services
N	Ms. Nan Thomey	Environmental Chemistry, Inc. Representing: Small Laboratories
Y	Mr. Rock Vitale	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Third Party Assessors

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Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Pletl will contact Dan Tholen and inform him of the three ELAB individuals who will be participating as members of the TNI subcommittee (chairs of three ELAB work groups). He will also reinforce to Mr. Tholen that they are not officially representing ELAB in their participation.

Dr. Pletl will contact Mr. Dick Reding in regards to the Chromium holding time issue.

The Laboratory Management Work Group will draft a letter to Dr. Gray regarding the issue of designation of methods (SW846).

Mr. Wyeth and Dr. Flowers will revisit language in the NEMC Challenge email and redistribute before next month's call.

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Attachment D

I hereby certify that these are the final version of minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on May 21, 2008.

Signature Chairman

Jim Pletl

Print Name Chairman