

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
June 19, 2013; 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 19, 2013. 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, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests.

Ms. Phelps congratulated Dr. Michael Wichman, who received the 2013 Silver Award from the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL). She said that the Silver Award is a new award given to an APHL member who makes or has made significant contributions to the advancement of public health laboratory science and/or practice. Dr. Wichman expressed his appreciation for the support from his staff and ELAB.

Ms. Phelps informed participants that the package for ELAB's charter renewal is being reviewed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act Office and the Administrator and is expected to be processed without delay in time for the Board's July 2013 meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Ms. Root asked whether any members had any comments regarding the May minutes. Mr. Jack Farrell moved to accept the minutes, and Dr. Wichman seconded the motion. The Board approved the May minutes unanimously with four abstentions and no discussion.

3. NEW TASK GROUPS

Ms. Root said that she had sent a spreadsheet of the topics and leaders to the participants. She asked task group leaders to provide updates on recent activities.

Ms. Root said that the qPCR group will meet in July to develop a plan. Ms. Michelle Wade also reported that the helium group will meet in July to develop a plan. Ms. Silky Labie said that the group devoted to working with the Interagency Data Quality Task Force will meet to develop a plan. In Dr. Mahesh Pujari's absence, the topic group members assigned to exploring the liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry issue reported that they had not met yet.

Dr. Dallas Wait agreed to lead the methods harmony group but requested additional information about the task group's charge; Ms. Root will discuss this with him.

Mr. John Philips has discussed the state of the method detection limits (MDLs) with the group and with Ms. Phelps. The NELAC Institute (TNI) is working on a proposed revision of the 40 CFR 136 MDL. Once the revision is completed, the topic group will contact the Office of Water (OW) to obtain more details regarding the desired output and also compile components for a *Federal Register* notice. More details may be able to be presented during the August 2013 face-to-face meeting.

Dr. Richard Burrows said in regard to the accurate identification and reporting of chlorinated ethers, Mr. Dave Speis incorporated the group's recommendations into a letter. The Board members discussed how to best review and approve the letter and recommendations, which had not been sent to the full ELAB. Ms. Phelps told the participants that to expedite the process, Dr. Burrows could describe the content and that the Board would need to conceptually agree with the direction taken and could approve the content in general. Dr. Burrows could address the editing and semantics separately. To facilitate the discussion, Dr. Burrows sent the letter and recommendations to the Board via email during the teleconference for the members to read.

The Board members reviewed the information during the teleconference, and Mr. Speis thought that the letter calls attention to the issue at hand and indicates that ELAB has prepared recommendations in the attached document. It makes a strong suggestion that prompt action be taken to follow the Board's recommendations, and ELAB is prepared to provide further comments if the Agency needs additional input. The compound must be named appropriately and the lexicon coordinated among programs to ensure that all entities searching and reporting on the same compound.

Dr. Burrows said that the technical section outlines the relationship between the two compounds, which one is the industrial compound of interest, and how it should be named. It also requests that EPA standardize this naming across its programs.

The Board members agreed that the letter and recommendations were well done and straightforward. One comment was that the section labeled "Recommended Remedies" should indicate areas that will be affected, such as the list of analytes and Method 8270, 40 CFR 136.

4. UPDATE ON REQUEST FROM OW

Dr. Burrows said that the review group met regarding EPA's latest revisions to Methods 624 and 625 and, based on comments from the Board members, developed a final list of comments to submit. Ms. Root said that it would not be necessary to review each of the comments in detail but suggested that they discuss specific comments from Board members.

Mr. Farrell commended the topic group on its work. He thought that the following topics either are missing or inadequately addressed in Methods 624 and 625: (1) verification of the MDL, (2) evaluation of manual integration, and (3) elimination and documentation of calibration points. In addition, Mr. Farrell said that the higher level curve (e.g., quadratic) needs more than five calibration points.

Members discussed these ideas, including the MDL, limit of detection (LOD) and limit of quantification (LOQ) verification. Dr. Burrows recommended that a strong global recommendation about them might be more appropriate than incorporating these into specific methods as discrepancies would arise when TNI modifies them. The Board members agreed to include in the cover letter a general recommendation that verifications should be completed. Mr. Farrell suggested that some measure of sensitivity should be included. Ms. Aurora Shields observed that the method itself requires one to use 40 CFR 136 for MDL. The letter could include a note there is no verification set for LOD or LOQ in either of these methods, and OW should include some procedures for verification from a global perspective. These should be integrated into the next methods update rule (MUR) revision, but members expressed concerns about delays in method updates because of uncertainty issues and the need to assure data quality. The Board agreed that the recommendations should include a strong statement that these ideas—verification and being tied to analytical chemistry—could be included in these and other methods. Dr. Burrows said that he would incorporate these concepts into the cover letter. Ms. Root reminded the Board members that the comments were due on June 28, 2013.

Mr. Farrell raised the issue about manual integration. Ms. Shields thought that this issue is similar to MDL in that it does not belong in each individual method. Mr. Farrell said that global adoption would be fine, as well as the concern about calibration points. Ms. Root pointed out that these comments were included in the first round of comments but were not adopted; including a recommendation for universal application about these topics in the cover letter might be more effective. Mr. Farrell suggested that strong language be used.

Dr. Burrows agreed to revise the cover letter to include the missing topics from 40 CFR 136, Methods in General, and suggest that the next MUR would be a good opportunity to add those globally.

Mr. Farrell commented that Section 1.3 should indicate that quality control (QC) review should be completed for all compounds; it is not made clear that additions to Table 2 also should be QC reviewed.

Participants discussed whether the purity of hydrogen or helium should be included. Dr. Burrows did not think that this needed to be included, and the ELAB members agreed.

Mr. Farrell also said that there is not an evaluation of 4-bromofluorobenzene or decafluorotriphenyl phosphine regarding how one determines spectra in terms of the apex or the apex plus or minus one. He suggested that a recommendation should be that either a specific apex or an average of the top three should be included. Dr. Burrows said that he will add the comment regarding Section 7.2.1.1 to recommend one of the following: the apex, apex plus or minus one, or all scans of the peak (as allowed in SW-846). A comment was made that to use the full peak, one would still have to scan the 20 prior samples.

Mr. Farrell said that in Section 12.1, Qualitative Determination, the minimum signal-to-noise ratio for identification was missing. Dr. Burrows said that this idea might raise issues with auditors. Ms. Phelps said that this level of detail usually is not included in guidelines. Mr. Farrell agreed and suggested that it should include in general terms the need to evaluate signal-to-noise ratio to adequately determine the peak above noise. Dr. Burrows initially suggested that the

phrasing might be along the lines of “analytes of interest must be present above noise” but later suggested that the topic be omitted to ensure that there are no unintended consequences.

Mr. Farrell noted that the definition of a “batch” is needed, but this might be too method specific. Ms. Root said that it should be defined in standard QA/QC plans for all methods. It was pointed out that Section 3.1 of Method 625 defines the term as a maximum of 20 samples; it also is included in Method 624. Participants commented that it might be a good idea to include a definition of “batch” and accompanying QC.

Mr. Farrell said that frequency is mentioned only at the beginning of Section 8.1 of Method 625. Dr. Burrows said that the discussion and placement of frequency makes sense in this context. Mr. Farrell ultimately agreed.

Ms. Root asked Ms. Phelps to remind ELAB how to proceed. Ms. Phelps said that if all members agree overall with the concepts discussed, the Board can approve the comments in principal now and then vote on editorial changes via email. Mr. Speis moved to approve the concepts, and Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

Ms. Root asked for a motion to agree to review the cover letter via email. Ms. Ruth Forman moved to approve review of the cover letter via email, and Dr. Wichman seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

Dr. Burrows said that he and Mr. Speis would revise the cover letter and recommendations and send them to the ELAB members for review on June 21, 2013. He requested that members review and send comments to him and Mr. Speis by June 25, 2013. He reminded the Board that the comments are due to OW on June 28, 2013. Ms. Root said this timeline was agreeable.

5. SET AGENDA FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING IN SAN ANTONIO

Ms. Phelps asked the Board to begin developing an agenda for the San Antonio meeting. She described the agenda for the face-to-face ELAB meetings during the past several years and noted that the agenda for the August 2013 face-to-face meeting could be similar, but the Board should determine what special topics should be discussed. One idea is to have several sessions that describe ELAB’s activities during the past 6 months. The Board members favored this idea, and Ms. Root began identifying some of ELAB’s recent activities. These include: the state of laboratory accreditation, the review of Methods 624 and 625 per the request of OW, changes to the ELAB website, and the accurate recording and reporting of others effort. Ms. Root asked ELAB members to send additional specific topics to her by July 24, 2013.

Ms. Phelps said that she will prepare a draft agenda for the meeting based on past years’ meetings and send it via email to the ELAB members for review and revision.

Ms. Patricia Carvajal reminded participants that the planned tour had been cancelled because of flooding, but she would try to schedule another activity in its place.

6. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Ms. Root said that Mr. Lem Walker (EPA) had asked that ELAB review and provide comments regarding Method 608 on pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls, Revision A, no later than August 2, 2013. She asked for members to serve on this topic group. Dr. Burrows, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Forman, Mr. Phillips and Dr. Wichman volunteered to serve on the group, and Dr. Burrows agreed to lead the review. Ms. Root will forward the most recent materials from Mr. Walker to the group members.

Mr. Phillips asked whether someone in his organization could serve on the task group in his stead. Ms. Phelps responded that this was not allowed.

Ms. Root noted that ELAB's next teleconference is July 17, 2013, and the deadline for comments is within 2 weeks following the meeting. She wondered whether approximately 1 month to complete the review and compile comments was sufficient. Ms. Shields observed that Method 608 needs significant review. Ms. Root suggested that ELAB use a similar process as the Board used today to approve the response as general concepts and then complete an editorial review once the task group has finalized the response.

Mr. Philips said that the update to drinking water methods published in the *Federal Register* on May 31, 2013, approved 81 additional procedures for drinking water. He suggested that the methods harmonization task group might want to review the update. Ms. Labie noted that these are not new methods but approved as alternative methods, and the update provides a means to expedite those types of methods.

7. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Darlene Summers reviewed the action items identified during the meeting, which are included in Attachment C.

8. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the Board at 2:48 p.m.

Attachment A

**AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**

Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

June 19, 2013; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Opening Remarks	Phelps/Root
Approval of May Minutes	Root
New Task Groups	Root/Wade
Request From the Office of Water	Root/Shields
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Root
Set Agenda for Face-to-Face Meeting in San Antonio	Phelps
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Root/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjourn	Phelps/Root

Attachment B**MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS**

ELAB TELECONFERENCE
June 19, 2013; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Patsy Root (Chair)	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Michelle L. Wade (Vice-Chair)	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
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	Ms. Patricia M. Carvajal	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Mr. John (Jack) E. Farrell, III	Analytical Excellence, Inc. Representing: The NELAC Institute (TNI)
Y	Ms. Ruth L. Forman	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Large Third-Party Assessors
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) S. Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third Party Assessors
N	Ms. Susan L. Mazur	Florida Power and Light Representing: Utility Water Act Group
Y	Mr. John H. Phillips	Ford Motor Company Representing: Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
N	Dr. Mahesh P. Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
Y	Dr. James N. Seiber	University of California, Davis Representing: Academic and Research Communities
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
Y	Mr. David (Dave) N. Speis	QC Laboratories Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL)
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
Y	Dr. Michael D. Wichman	State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Darlene Summers (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Ms. Lynn Bradley (Guest)	TNI
Y	Mr. Stuart Magoon	City of Tacoma Environmental Services Laboratory

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. Kristen LeBaron will finalize the May 2013 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. Root will discuss with Dr. Wait details for leading the methods harmony topic group.
3. Dr. Burrows will revise the letter regarding EPA's latest revisions to Methods 624 and 625 and send it to the Board members via email; the comments are due to EPA no later than June 28, 2013.
4. Dr. Burrows and Mr. Speis will revise ELAB's cover letter regarding compound identification inconsistency and send it to the Board members by June 20, 2013.
5. Board members will send to Ms. Root specific topics for the August 2013 face-to-face meeting in San Antonio, Texas, by July 24, 2013.
6. Ms. Phelps will prepare a draft agenda for the August 2013 face-to-face send it via email to the Board members.
7. Ms. Root will forward updated documents regarding Method 608, Revision A to the Board members for their comment, and Dr. Burrows will coordinate the review team.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on June 19, 2013.



Signature Chair

Ms. Patsy Root

Print Name Chair