

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
July 17, 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 July 17, 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 informed the Board that its charter had been renewed for 2 years, and the *Federal Register* notice is being processed. The charter is effective from July 12, 2013, until 11:59 p.m. on July 11, 2015. In response to a question from Dr. Jim Seiber, Ms. Phelps explained that there were no significant changes to the ELAB charter in terms of intent, but the language has been clarified in certain places as a result of global Agency changes resulting from changes to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). In response to a question from Ms. Root, Ms. Phelps said that she does not anticipate any issues with ELAB's charter being renewed in 2 years, particularly because ELAB is the most highly complimented EPA FACA committee and viewed as a role model for FACA committees across the Agency. Ms. Phelps also reported that the ELAB website was updated recently, with a small amount of work remaining once some contractor issues are resolved.

**2. APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES**

Ms. Root asked whether any members had any comments regarding the June minutes; there were none. Ms. Michelle Wade moved to accept the minutes without changes, and Dr. Mahesh Pujari seconded the motion. The Board approved the June minutes unanimously with no discussion.

**3. NEW TASK GROUPS**

Ms. Root said that the most pressing Task Group deadline was for the Method 608 comments. Dr. Richard Burrows noted that Method 608 needs a great deal of work, and he had received many significant comments from the ELAB members about the method. Method consistency will be a key issue. The group has not had a chance to process the comments and assimilate them into a response. A great deal of work is involved, and the August deadline may be a problem. Ms. Root noted that she had reviewed the comments that ELAB had provided to the Agency regarding Methods 624 and 625 and asked the Board members whether they thought that the

format of ELAB's comments on EPA methods should be consistent (i.e., comments embedded within the method document vs. summarized by section in a separate document). Ms. Ruth Forman said that an alternative approach would be to develop a cover letter that provides an overall summary and points to the specific comments within the document; summarizing a great deal of comments will be time-consuming. Dr. Michael Wichman thought that embedded comments would be more useful to Mr. Lem Walker (EPA). Ms. Root and Dr. Dallas Wait agreed that embedded comments were easier to review. Ms. Root added that EPA had provided ELAB the opportunity to review the "B" version of Methods 624 and 625 following the Board's review of the "A" version; she hoped that the Board would be provided the same opportunity for Method 608.

Ms. Forman thought that it was better to provide the comments prior to the deadline rather than be consistent with the Board's Method 624 and 625 comments. The Board members were amenable to this approach, and Dr. Burrows agreed to develop a cover letter detailing the global issues that points to the detailed comments embedded within the method document. He will send it to the Task Group members by the end of the week for their input, which should be received no later than Monday, July 22, 2013. Once the Task Group approves the letter, Dr. Burrows can send it via email to the full ELAB no later than Wednesday, July 24, 2013, for a vote.

In response to a question from Dr. Wait, Dr. Burrows explained that although the comments within the document were marked as his, they reflected the thoughts of the entire Task Group. Dr. Wait noted that the reference section was outdated and needed to be reviewed. Mr. Jack Farrell suggested that this be included as a Board comment, recommending that EPA review the references to determine their relevance. Mr. John Phillips agreed that the references were outdated.

Everyone thanked Dr. Burrows for his extensive effort on this issue. Ms. Root noted that ELAB has received many requests similar to this and completes their comments prior to the deadline. This highlights the quality of ELAB's work, which in turn encourages the Agency to use the Board as a tool.

Ms. Root said that she had spoken with Dr. Robin Oshiro (EPA) about use of qPCR for Recreational Water Quality Criteria; she will schedule another teleconference with the Agency to discuss bullet points that the Task Group has developed about the issue. EPA is developing a manual on implementation, and the Task Group would like ELAB to be given the opportunity to review the manual as it is written rather than after it has been completed. Dr. Wichman noted that Orange County, California, has developed a PCR-based rapid method for its beaches.

Ms. Michelle Wade reported that the helium group met via teleconference and discussed the Laboratory Management Workgroup's previous work on this helium issue. The Task Group will meet again via teleconference the following week after the members have reviewed the original EPA request on the topic and additional technical helium information. The goal is to develop a letter with recommendations prior to the August ELAB face-to-face meeting.

Ms. Silky Labie said that in terms of the Interagency Data Quality Task Force issue, the Task Group is at the point that it needs to determine its next steps. Dr. Pujari will be out of the country for the next 3 weeks, but he will meet with the Task Group working on the liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry issue when he returns.

Dr. Wait reported that the Task Group devoted to methods harmony met via teleconference on July 10, 2013, and determined that it will be challenging to make global progress. The group determined that it will be more beneficial to identify specific areas on which the Task Group can work. There is a general concern about how successful this effort might be, but the group did not have a quorum, so he will try to schedule another call in 3 to 4 weeks to obtain more comprehensive input from more of the Task Group members. One approach could be to make recommendations from a quality assurance standpoint rather than a methods standpoint. Alternatively, ELAB could recommend that EPA provide guidance when new technologies become available to encourage the various offices to adopt these new technologies. Dr. Wait will not be able to attend the ELAB face-to-face meeting; Ms. Wade or Mr. Speis can speak on his behalf if necessary. Ms. Root said that the goals/expected outcomes and any progress, including any ideas that have been proposed as next steps, would be presented at the face-to-face meeting.

Mr. John Philips said that the method detection limits (MDLs) issue is on hold until The NELAC Institute (TNI) has developed its procedure. Dr. Burrows said that TNI is finalizing an interim MDL document to present to EPA and at the meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Ms. Root reported that Mr. Speis already had sent bullet points regarding the accurate identification and reporting of chlorinated ethers effort. Dr. Burrows will develop additional bullets about the effort.

The Task Group leaders will send bullet points about the goals/expected outcomes and progress of their Task Groups to Ms. Root no later than August 1, 2013, so that she can include them in the PowerPoint presentation for the August face-to-face meeting. She will forward the final PowerPoint presentation to the ELAB members prior to the meeting.

#### **4. REVIEW AGENDA FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING IN SAN ANTONIO**

Ms. Root reported that she had sent the draft ELAB agenda to the Board members prior to the teleconference; the Board members did not offer any comments or changes to the agenda. In response to a question from a Board member, Ms. Lynn Bradley (TNI) said that the room assignment for the ELAB meeting is "Regency East."

#### **5. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

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

#### **6. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS**

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

#### **7. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Speis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Ms. Forman seconded and the Board approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

**Attachment A**

**AGENDA  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**

Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

July 17, 2013; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Opening Remarks	Phelps/Root
Approval of June Minutes	Root
New Task Groups	All
Review Agenda for Face-to-Face Meeting in San Antonio	All
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Root
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Root/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjourn	Phelps/Root

**Attachment B****MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS**

ELAB TELECONFERENCE  
**July 17, 2013; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT**

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
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
N	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
Y	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
Y	Dr. Mahesh P. Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
Y	Dr. James (Jim) N. Seiber	University of California, Davis Representing: Academic and Research Communities
N	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)

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Ms. Lynn Bradley (Guest)	TNI

## **Attachment C**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the June 2013 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Dr. Burrows will develop a cover letter summarizing the global issues regarding Method 608 that also points to the detailed comments embedded within the method document and send it to the Task Group members no later than Friday, July 19, 2013. After the Task Group approves it, no later than Monday, July 22, 2013, Dr. Burrows will send it to the full Board no later than Wednesday, July 24, 2013, so that the members can vote on it via email.
3. The Task Group leaders will send bullet points about the progress of their Task Groups to Ms. Root no later than August 1, 2013, so that she can include them in the PowerPoint for the August face-to-face meeting.

## Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on July 17, 2013.



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Signature Chair

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Ms. Patsy Root

Print Name Chair