

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

July 20, 2011; 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 20, 2011, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. EDT. 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. Judy Morgan, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Autry, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference. Ms. Morgan called an official roll of the Board members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES

Ms. Morgan asked whether there were any changes to the June 2011 Board minutes. Mr. Dave Speis moved to accept the minutes with no changes, and Dr. Reza Karimi seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the June minutes with no changes and no further discussion. Ms. Patsy Root noted that, although it had been stated during the June meeting that it was not possible to easily track the Agency's proposed rules or information gathering, there is an RSS feed for EPA news updates, which interested individuals can choose to receive via e-mail. Ms. Root e-mailed the link to Ms. Morgan. Ms. Morgan will forward the link to the ELAB members.

3. WORKGROUP ACTIVITY

Ms. Morgan explained that the Monitoring Workgroup had finalized a series clarifying questions for Dr. Julie Kinzelman (Racine Health Department) regarding the Recreational Water Quality Criteria Development. The plan is to obtain information from Dr. Kinzelman and draft a letter to EPA regarding the concerns that have arisen as a result of the criteria development. The Workgroup needs information regarding the use of the criteria before it can determine how to approach the issue and provide appropriate recommendations. In terms of the prior greening recommendation, Ms. Morgan has begun to draft a letter to the Agency that she hopes she will be able to complete within the next few weeks.

Dr. Karimi provided an update for the Measurement and Technology Workgroup, which met during the previous week via teleconference. Mr. Jeff Lowry is finalizing a draft letter to Mr. Greg Carroll (EPA) regarding the proficiency testing, which the Workgroup will submit to the Board members for their input when the letter has been completed. Mr. Speis said that it would be useful to receive an update regarding the open recommendation to the Office of Water

(OW) about the adoption of The NELAC Institute (TNI) quality system standards; he suggested including this on the face-to-face meeting agenda. Mr. Carroll could provide information regarding in which direction the initiative is moving; the last update was received during the January face-to-face meeting in Savannah, Georgia. Mr. Speis will contact Mr. Carroll to obtain an update and possibly place the item on the face-to-face meeting agenda.

Dr. Jeff Flowers provided an update for the Laboratory Management Workgroup regarding the efforts on the state of national accreditation. The Workgroup needs the information from the ELAB members' constituents to move forward. There has been some confusion about the constituent interview process. Dr. Flowers explained that the Board members should summarize the interviews with the constituents. Dr. Flowers asked whether a deadline should be implemented. Mr. Speis said that the goal had been to obtain input by this meeting, but the confusion slowed the information-gathering process. The members should be ready to discuss the obtained information during the face-to-face meeting in August. The Board considered the logistics of discussing this issue in a public format. Mr. Jack Farrell reported that he would not be able to obtain TNI input until September. A Board member thought that it would be better to discuss the information during the September ELAB meeting.

Ms. Shields asked whether she should perform more formal interviews; her process was to have her constituents fill in the matrix. Mr. Speis said that whether she wanted to do this depended on the quality of the information that she had received; it would be a good opportunity to ask any clarifying questions of the constituents. Mr. Speis and Ms. Morgan reported that the interviews had been lasting approximately 1 hour each, depending on the passion of the interviewee. Dr. Karimi said that his challenge was to find individuals who are familiar with the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (commonly known as NELAP). Ms. Shields said that she was having trouble finding individuals willing to respond; her responses may be limited to a very small pool. Mr. Speis thought that, given these challenges, it would be prudent to wait until September to discuss this issue.

Dr. Flowers said that obtaining input at the August meeting would be beneficial, as the participants would be an informed group. Mr. Speis said that he could modify the spreadsheet so that the participants would best be able to provide the needed information. He asked the Board members whether they thought that input should be obtained during the face-to-face meeting. Mr. Farrell thought that an hour of the face-to-face meeting should be devoted to obtaining information from the participants; input could be gathered directly on the screen at the meeting. Dr. Karimi did not want to be confined to a specific format to obtain information. Mr. Farrell thought that information about strengths could be gathered in addition to weaknesses. Dr. Karimi thought that the participants' expectations for a national accreditation system should be recorded. Mr. Speis asked Ms. Morgan whether there was time on the agenda to accommodate such a discussion. Ms. Morgan responded that Ms. Autry had submitted a draft agenda to Mr. Jerry Parr (TNI). Ms. Autry said that time was limited because of the length of the open discussion. She could remove the specific times for discussion during the 10:30 a.m. session, which currently is devoted to Workgroup updates. This would allow flexibility in discussion times during this session. The ELAB members agreed to this solution. Ms. Autry will remove the specific discussion times from the 10:30 a.m. session at the face-to-face meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Morgan introduced the Method 524.4 issues, which arise from the fact that OW thinks that a new method is needed rather than revising the prior method. From the standpoint of quality control, there are a number of cases in which gases are exchanged, but method criteria must be met. There has been confusion as to why a new method is necessary. The previous method could have been revised to include a second gas while still meeting the method criteria.

In response to a question from Dr. Flowers, Mr. Speis explained that the current process is the usual one taken by the Agency. Dr. Karimi said that the question was whether the same strategy should be implemented that was discussed for the Office of Solid Waste. Ms. Morgan did not think that one method was a revision of another; the numbering system is designed to represent a technology and different uses of that technology. In this case, the difference is not that significant, and a previous method could have been revised. Dr. Flowers said that inclusion of a sentence describing the change and its likely effects would be beneficial. Mr. Speis thought that it was a 180-degree change. Ms. Morgan said that the promulgation method also must be considered. It would save a great deal of time if ELAB could discuss method revision with Agency personnel. Dr. Flowers thought that there should be an option to allow for additional gases.

Mr. Farrell said that there were two issues at play. The first was whether ELAB and the laboratory community understand the process and whether EPA even understands its process. The second is the method flexibility issue. These two issues would be well worth the Board's efforts to discuss the concerns with drinking water staff, and it would be aligned with what is occurring in other programs. Mr. Speis said that there are significant differences between the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR) and EPA's drinking water program in terms of their approaches to method development. Many technological laboratory-oriented operations enter the process. ELAB needs to better understand the process because changes such as this confuse the laboratory community. Mr. Speis thought that Dr. Richard Burrows was going to investigate this issue and report on it; it would be beneficial to obtain his input.

Mr. Farrell said that how the revisions are handled must be considered and wondered whether this meant that the new method is better than the previous. He had not seen anything from a policy perspective that indicated this, which could be confusing from a data feasibility standpoint. Dr. Flowers noted that this was an important issue because it involves public drinking water; the inflexibility in the drinking water realm also must be considered. Ms. Morgan thought that the most significant issue is that the drinking water methods are mandated to a very narrow matrix, but ORCR provides guidance through a very broad matrix; therefore, it is difficult to mandate prescriptive issues to a broad matrix. The approach will need to be different, and ELAB must understand OW and its reasoning behind its actions. OW does not appear to understand how the laboratories use the methods. Dr. Karimi said that what constitutes a new method must be understood, as this is what causes confusion. What are the criteria for the method numbering system? Dr. Morgan thought that it would be worthwhile for a group to speak to Mr. Carroll and OW about this process. There is a disconnect when it comes to usability. Ms. Shields said that OW had released guidance about what constitutes a method change for the laboratory community, but the office did not appear to refer to that in this instance. Ms. Morgan agreed and thought that needless effort was being expended to create a new method when it could have been incorporated into a current method. Ms. Shields agreed that ELAB must communicate with OW

regarding this issue. Mr. Farrell asked whether the topic should be sent to an existing Workgroup or whether a specific Task Force should be created. Dr. Karimi thought that developing a Task Force, similar to the one that investigated the Office of Solid Waste issues, would be the best method. It was decided that a Task Force be formed that includes Dr. Burrows, Dr. Michael Wichman, Dr. Karimi, Ms. Shields, Ms. Morgan and Dr. Skip Kingston.

Ms. Morgan explained that during the June Board meeting Ms. Nan Thomey had introduced concerns regarding Method 8260 and the national emission standards for polyvinyl chloride and its copolymers. Mr. Speis drafted a letter regarding this issue and sent it to the members, who provided numerous comments. The letter is close to being finalized and sent to EPA, but ELAB has been provided additional time. Mr. Speis appreciated the extra time because he would like to discuss the issue further with Mr. John Phillips. Mr. Speis provided examples that indicate that the method selection appears to be very confusing. He would like to base the Board's response on emphasizing that the Agency must provide a clearer choice of methodology as well as clarity on method selection in general. Mr. Phillips agreed with the addition in the letter of the recommendation regarding methanol. Mr. Speis clarified for Dr. Flowers that it was a wastewater and not an air issue and explained the process

Ms. Morgan asked Mr. Speis whether he understood the motivation behind EPA's recommendation. Mr. Speis explained that Method 107 is an industry-developed method. Appropriate holding times were investigated for Method 8260, and there was a low bias when the two methods were compared. He thought it might be related to the fact that Method 107 often is more rigorous in certain areas. In response to a question from a Board member, Mr. Speis explained that the holding time for Method 107 was 1 day. If the objective is to obtain true values on the concentration of hazardous air pollutants in resins, then the more rigorous method should be used, but he did not think that the holding time should be an issue. It is an organic compound trapped in an organic matrix.

5. FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Mr. Phillips thought that his Workgroup might need to meet prior to the face-to-face meeting to discuss its plans. Because Drs. Jim Pletl and Flowers will not be able to physically attend the face-to-face meeting, Mr. Phillips will provide the update on the Sufficiently Sensitive Methods, and Mr. Speis will provide updates on Improving EPA Regulations and the Method Update Rule. Ms. Morgan said that each Workgroup would provide updates at the meeting. The Laboratory Management Workgroup is scheduled to present its information about the State of National Accreditation following the other Workgroup updates, which will begin the open discussion to obtain input on the issue from the meeting participants. Also on the agenda are updates regarding OW issues, which can include an update on the method revision process and/or an update from Mr. Carroll on OW use of TNI quality system standards.

Ms. Morgan asked whether the ELAB members had any questions or comments regarding the face-to-face meeting agenda. Dr. Karimi asked whether an announcement would be made regarding the development of the Task Force. It was decided that Dr. Burrows would include this during his update. Dr. Karimi asked whether anything was introduced by the participants at the January face-to-face meeting that the Board should address during this meeting. Ms. Morgan did not think so, and Ms. Shields thought that these items were incorporated into the Workgroups.

Ms. Morgan will review the minutes from the January face-to-face meeting to ensure that there are no outstanding items.

6. OTHER ITEMS

Ms. Morgan forwarded the marketing letter to the members prior to this meeting and asked for their input. The letter was developed by several Board members and reviewed by Ms. Autry. Ideally, the letter will encourage a good relationship between ELAB and EPA. Mr. Speis said that Ms. Autry would need to help identify EPA staff members who should receive the marketing letter with the new charter. Ms. Autry announced that ELAB was officially rechartered for 2 years starting on July 15, 2011; this will be announced in the *Federal Register* within the next week or so.

Ms. Morgan said that another outstanding item for the Board members to discuss was the ELAB website. She thought that a Task Force should be formed to provide suggestions on how to improve the website. Currently, the website does not provide the type of information that highlights the interesting activities that the Board undertakes. Ms. Shields said that there is no existing website structure to allow a Task Force to move forward.

Ms. Autry suggested setting up a teleconference with the Website Task Force, which includes Ms. Morgan, Mr. Speis, Ms. Root, Dr. Wichman, and Ms. Silky Labie. During the teleconference, Ms. Autry can provide information on the format that she uses when submitting website information to her IT person. The Website Task Force decided to meet via teleconference at 2:00 p.m. EDT on Monday, July 25, 2011.

7. REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Morgan reported that all of the action items from the June 2011 Board meeting had been accomplished.

Ms. Kristen LeBaron reviewed the action items identified during this meeting, which are listed in Attachment C. Mr. Farrell noted that the objectives of the Task Force assigned to understand the method updates need to be defined; they are broader than simply investigating Method 524.4. Dr. Kingston said that one of the issues that was discussed during the Measurement and Technology Workgroup meeting the prior week was that it was part of ELAB's obligation to provide assistance regarding how EPA could implement the Board's recommendations. It would be prudent to do the same thing for this issue. In this instance, the Board must determine how the Agency is making revisions and then make appropriate suggestions regarding how EPA can improve that process. It is necessary for ELAB to provide any assistance to EPA that it can regarding the various tasks on which the Board provides recommendations, particularly in a time of budget cuts and position eliminations. He suggested that this should be an agenda item for ELAB. Ms. Morgan agreed.

Ms. Morgan said that the members were accomplishing many activities and projects despite their busy work schedules. She thanked the members for their time and expressed appreciation for their participation on the teleconferences. She noted that Dr. Pletl, Ms. Shields, Dr. Flowers,

Dr. Kingston and possibly Mr. Lowry will not be able to attend the face-to-face meeting in person, but that they will attend via teleconference.

8. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Morgan thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Mr. Speis introduced a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Mr. Phillips seconded. Following a unanimous vote, Ms. Morgan adjourned the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD

Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

July 20, 2010; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Opening Remarks	Autry/Morgan
Approval of June Minutes	Morgan
Workgroup Activity	
Monitoring Workgroup	Morgan
- Recreational Water Quality Criteria Development	
- Laboratory Greening Recommendation	
Measurement/Technology Workgroup	Lowry
- Recommendations to the Office of Water on Proficiency Testing	
Laboratory Management Workgroup	Flowers
- State of National Accreditation	
New Business	All
- Method 524.4	Burrows
Face-to-Face Meeting	All
Other Items	All
Review Action Items	Morgan
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Autry/Morgan

Attachment B**MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS**

ELAB TELECONFERENCE
July 20, 2010; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Judith (Judy) R. Morgan (Chair)	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Environmental Laboratories
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields (Vice- Chair)	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
Y	Ms. Lara P. Autry, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
N	Dr. Richard Burrows	Test America Inc. Representing: Commercial Laboratory Industry
N	Mr. Eddie Clemons, II	Practical Quality Consulting Services Representing: Clients of QS Services
Y	Mr. John (Jack) E. Farrell, III	Analytical Excellence, Inc. Representing: The NELAC Institute (TNI)
Y	Dr. Jeff Flowers	City of Maitland, Florida Representing: Elected Officials of Local Government
Y	Dr. Reza Karimi	Battelle Memorial Institute Representing: Nonprofit Research and Development Organizations
Y	Dr. H. M. (Skip) Kingston	Duquesne University Representing: Government Consortiums, Native Americans, and Academia
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) S. Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third Party Assessors
N	Mr. Jeffrey (Jeff) C. Lowry	Environmental Resource Associates Representing: Proficiency Testing Providers
Y	Mr. John H. Phillips	Ford Motor Company Representing: Alliance of Auto Manufacturers
Y	Dr. James (Jim) Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Environmental Laboratories
Y	Ms. Patsy Root	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Mr. David (Dave) N. Speis	Accutest Laboratories Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL)
Y	Ms. Michelle L. Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
Y	Dr. Michael D. Wichman	University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)

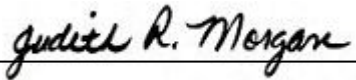
Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the June 2011 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Autry via e-mail.
2. Ms. Morgan will forward the EPA RSS feed link from Ms. Root to the ELAB members.
3. Mr. Speis will contact Mr. Carroll to obtain an update regarding OW adoption of the TNI quality system standards and possibly place the item on the face-to-face meeting agenda.
4. Ms. Autry will remove the specific discussion times from the 10:30 a.m. session at the face-to-face meeting.
5. A Task Force including Dr. Burrows, Dr. Wichman, Dr. Karimi, Ms. Shields, Ms. Morgan, and Dr. Kingston will investigate Method 524.4 issues as well as pursue a broader understanding of how drinking water methods are developed.
6. Mr. Speis will discuss the Method 8260 issues with Mr. Phillips before finalizing the letter to submit to EPA.
7. Mr. Phillips will provide the update on the Sufficiently Sensitive Methods, and Mr. Speis will provide updates on Improving EPA Regulations and the Method Update Rule, at the face-to-face meeting.
8. Dr. Burrows will include an update about the Drinking Water Methods Task Force during his presentation at the face-to-face meeting.
9. Ms. Morgan will review the minutes from the January face-to-face meeting to ensure that there are no outstanding items.
10. ELAB members will provide input regarding the marketing letter that Ms. Morgan sent them.
11. Ms. Autry will schedule a teleconference for the Website Task Force on Monday, July 25, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. EDT.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on July 20, 2011.



Signature Chair

Ms. Judith R. Morgan

Print Name Chair