

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
October 17, 2012; 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 October 17, 2012, 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. INTRODUCTIONS OF ALL BOARD MEMBERS**

Ms. Aurora Shields, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests. The Board members and DFO introduced themselves and provided information about their backgrounds.

**2. OPENING REMARKS**

Ms. Phelps emphasized that she is a resource for the Board members as they serve their terms.

**3. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES**

Ms. Shields asked whether the Board members had comments regarding the September 2012 minutes. Mr. Dave Speis moved to accept the minutes, and Dr. Michael Wichman seconded the motion. The Board approved the September minutes with no discussion, no changes and one abstention.

**4. GENERAL WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITY**

Ms. Shields explained that Workgroups are an integral component of ELAB, with much of the Board's work undertaken within each of the three Workgroups: Monitoring, Laboratory Management, and Measurement and Technology. The new Board members must choose a Workgroup on which to serve. The Workgroups do not include a quorum of the ELAB membership to simplify the Workgroup meeting process in terms of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The Workgroups present their work to the full Board so that the ELAB members can reach a consensus as a whole. *Ad hoc* Workgroups also may be formed when necessary. Ms. Phelps explained that eight members constitutes a quorum of this Board, so each Workgroup may not have more than seven members to simplify the FACA process. The Workgroups do not make decisions for the Board; ELAB still must achieve consensus on all issues.

Dr. Mahesh Pujari asked whether ELAB members are allowed to serve on multiple Workgroups. Ms. Shields responded that this is possible, as long as there are no more than seven members serving on a Workgroup. Mr. Farrell said that serving on multiple Workgroups is not an issue, but it is important to ensure that each Workgroup is staffed with at least the minimum amount of expertise and resources needed to address the issues. Ms. Shields explained that the Workgroups meet in addition to the monthly Board meeting. After Ms. Shields sends the members a brief description of each of the Workgroups via email, the Board members will send Ms. Shields their three choices of Workgroups in order of preference via email.

### ***Monitoring Workgroup***

Ms. Root explained that the Monitoring Workgroup had not met since the prior ELAB meeting. The Workgroup currently is examining the Agency's revised Recreational Water Quality Criteria, particularly qPCR as a rapid testing method. Questions have arisen regarding assessment, training and so forth. EPA was scheduled to release the final criteria on October 15, 2012, but this has been postponed until the end of November 2012. Once these are published, the Workgroup can work with EPA in moving forward. The Workgroup also examined Agency publication of its position on utilization of sufficiently sensitive methods.

### ***Measurement and Technology Workgroup***

Mr. Phillips explained that the Measurement and Technology Workgroup has been meeting primarily via email. Once the new Workgroup is established, he will schedule a teleconference so that the members may familiarize themselves with each other and the topics. The Workgroup currently is addressing three action items. The first is engaging with the Intergovernmental Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF) to explore revisions to the data quality objective (DQO) process to incorporate an interim evaluation step after the collection and analysis of an initial set of field samples. Since the last Board meeting, Mr. Phillips contacted Ms. Ellen Treimel, Chair of IDQTF, to explain about ELAB's interest in improving the DQO process for site investigation and remediation. He hopes that a Measurement and Technology Workgroup member can participate in the bimonthly Task Force teleconferences to discuss this topic further. Mr. Phillips read to the Board members the email that he had sent to Ms. Treimel. He asked those ELAB members who are interested in working with the IDQTF to contact him.

The second item that the Workgroup is addressing is coordinating a task force with members from ELAB, Office of Water (OW), EPA's Quality Management Program and possibly the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) to explore how to expand the use of the DQO process within OW programs. Mr. Phillips has secured a contact within the Quality Management Program, Dr. John Warren, and contacted Ms. Jan Matuszko (EPA) via email to determine who she would like to represent OW on the task force. He recommended that a task force meeting occur during the next ELAB face-to-face meeting and developed a tentative agenda. At the meeting, OW would provide information on its current process for establishing water quality limits and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits and demonstrating compliance of these limits. The task force would discuss conceptual approaches to applying the DQO process within the office.

Ms. Phelps said that the FEM agenda for its October meeting was too full to introduce this topic. In response to a question from Mr. Phillips, Ms. Phelps explained that the next meeting of the

FEM would be on January 23, 2013, which will be after the Board's next face-to-face meeting. She provided background about the FEM, which was established in 2003 to promote consistency across the Agency in terms of measurement, methodology, monitoring, technology and laboratory science issues that have multiprogram impacts. The FEM's charge was to ensure that the validation and dissemination of methods for sample collection and analysis have a consistent set of guidelines to ensure that monitoring studies were statistically sound. The primary areas of focus for the FEM have been improving the quality of the Agency's methods, implementing the performance approach to environmental measurements, and ensuring greater communication and outreach. The FEM has addressed method detection, quantitation and calibration and their associated challenges and formats across EPA programs. The FEM has dealt with general laboratory competency to address internal Agency laboratory competency in addition to the competency of external organizations. It also has advocated for national environmental accreditation. The FEM provided the foundation for EPA's participation in the National Environmental Monitoring Conference via the Environmental Measurement Symposium and completed an assessment of all of the Agency's monitoring programs. Currently, the FEM is completing the building of the Monitoring Information Technology and Opportunities Resource Tool, which is a website that directs to existing monitoring programs, identifies needs and gaps, and creates connections among monitoring organizations. When it is ready, the FEM would like ELAB's input regarding the tool. Additional information can be found on the FEM website (<http://www.epa.gov/fem>). If the Board members have any questions about the FEM, they can contact Ms. Phelps.

Mr. Phillips requested that the FEM be involved with the Task Force at the next face-to-face meeting. In response to a question from Dr. James Seiber, Ms. Autry explained that ELAB meets in person twice a year in conjunction with the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation and Environmental Measurement Symposium. The next Forum on Laboratory Accreditation will take place from January 14–17, 2013, at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado. ELAB's meeting always is the first day of each conference; those unable to attend in person can attend via teleconference using the same call-in number as the monthly teleconferences. The next Environmental Measurement Symposium is scheduled for August 5–9, 2013, in San Antonio, Texas. Therefore, the next two ELAB face-to-face meetings will be on January 14, 2013, and August 5, 2013. The meeting schedules are published on the ELAB website, and the 2013 schedule will be added to the website soon.

Another action that the Workgroup is addressing is to provide recommendations regarding the mechanism, scope and expectations of a stakeholder group to review the proposed method detection limit (MDL) and minimum limit (ML) revisions being developed by The NELAC Institute (TNI) Expert Chemistry Committee. Based on Workgroup feedback, the stakeholder group will be formed via a FACA subcommittee approach, using the *Federal Register* to solicit members for the subcommittee. Mr. Phillips contacted Ms. Jan Matuszko (EPA) via email to obtain confirmation of which stakeholder groups that OW would like represented and the number of people that should represent each group. Current suggestions include state regulators, environmental laboratories, industry, environmental nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, and municipalities. The scope of the stakeholder review group will be to review the TNI Expert Chemistry Committee's product (i.e., revised MDL/ML procedure), provide comments regarding how well the revised procedures would be accepted by the stakeholder communities, identify specific "game stoppers" for the stakeholder groups, advise how the revised procedure could best be implemented, identify resources within stakeholder community

to evaluate and test the new procedure, and communicate the benefits of the new procedure to the stakeholder groups.

Dr. Pujari asked whether there was a draft document regarding how this issue will be addressed. Dr. Richard Burrows said that the TNI Expert Chemistry Committee is working on this. Dr. Pujari noted that the MDL and ML often are misinterpreted, so this is an important topic. He asked whether there were any plans to replace 40 CFR 136 Appendix B. Mr. Phillips said that the Expert Chemistry Committee's strategy is to the appendix, which covers detection. The goal is to incorporate quantitation so that it more easily fits into the regulations. In response to comments by Dr. Pujari, Ms. Shields clarified that ELAB is not developing the revised MDL procedure. The Board approached the Agency about the issue, and the outcome was that an expert committee was needed. It will be EPA's decision to revise 40 CFR 136 and related methodologies based on the outcomes of the TNI Expert Chemistry Committee. Mr. Phillips added that EPA had requested the establishment of a stakeholder review group to review the TNI committee's results.

### ***Laboratory Management Workgroup***

Mr. Speis explained that the Laboratory Management Workgroup's primary focus for the previous 2 years has been the state of national accreditation. He explained the Board's process in obtaining input from stakeholders about the operational and economic aspects of national accreditation. The stakeholder responses were compiled in a 27-page document and then summarized in a 12-page document, which was published on the ELAB website for informational purposes only and did not represent a Board consensus. ELAB examined the suggestions made by the stakeholders to determine whether the Board could make a recommendation to EPA regarding national accreditation. The Board has obtained public comments regarding the information that it has presented publicly via the website and its August 2012 face-to-face meeting. Currently, ELAB must finalize and submit its recommendations to the Agency and respond to the comments that it has received.

Ms. Shields explained that a page on ELAB's website will be dedicated to this effort so that all relevant information about the Board's process can be found in one location. The Board members received three separate documents in preparation for this meeting, including the Board's draft response to public comments about its national accreditation efforts, the draft cover letter to Dr. Michael Shapiro (EPA) regarding ELAB's recommendations on national accreditation, and the website layout for the national accreditation documents and relevant minutes.

Dr. Wichman moved to approve the response to comments, which Ms. Root seconded. The motion was passed with one abstention. Ms. Root moved to accept the letter to Dr. Shapiro with final approval via email after Ms. Phelps and Ms. Kristen LeBaron provide editorial review. Ms. Patricia Carvajal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Shields explained that the Board needed to approve the layout for the national accreditation webpage. In response to a clarifying question by Mr. Speis, Ms. Shields explained that all of the components of the webpage already have been approved by the Board for publication, and all of them already are present on the ELAB website. The new layout is merely a reorganization of materials already available so that they could be more easily found in one place. Mr. Speis

moved to accept a comprehensive package via email once the members have had a chance to provide additional review of the layout; Ms. Root seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Ms. Shields will send a clarifying email to the ELAB members detailing the various documents on which the ELAB members will be voting via email. Mr. Farrell asked whether the dates that the website components were approved could be added to the website layout document. Ms. LeBaron will provide editorial review of the national accreditation recommendations.

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

Dr. Pujari thought that ELAB should address the issue of using SW-846 methods for wastewater analysis. Dr. Burrows thought that two separate issues were involved and moved that the Board consider developing a recommendation to EPA that appropriate SW-846 methods should be approved for wastewater analysis. Dr. Pujari seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Board discussed the most appropriate Workgroup to handle the issue, which appears to be the Measurement and Technology Workgroup. Mr. Farrell reminded the members that although a Workgroup may be assigned an issue, it may be placed as a lower priority depending on which issues the Workgroup already is addressing. Dr. Pujari added that alternative methods for wastewater analysis should be in place.

## **6. UPDATES FROM THE DFO**

Ms. Phelps said that she is excited to welcome the new and prior members to the Board. The members should not hesitate to contact her if they need anything or have any questions. Ms. Shields added that members can contact her as well.

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

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

## **8. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting, which Ms. Root seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

**Attachment A**

**AGENDA  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**

Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

October 17, 2012; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Introductions of All Board Members	Phelps
Opening Remarks	Phelps/Shields
Approval of September Minutes	Shields
General Workgroup Activity	
Monitoring Workgroup	Root
Measurement and Technology Workgroup	Phillips
Laboratory Management Workgroup	Shields/Speis
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Shields
Updates From the DFO	Phelps
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Shields
Closing Remarks/Adjourn	Phelps/Shields

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

ELAB TELECONFERENCE  
**October 17, 2012; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT**

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields (Chair)	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
Y	Ms. Patsy Root (Vice-Chair)	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
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
N	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
N	Dr. Robert O. Miller	Colorado State University Representing: Soil and Agronomy Community
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 N. Seiber	University of California, Davis Representing: Academic and Research Communities
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	Ms. Michelle L. Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
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	Mr. Martin Hyman (Student Contractor)	EPA
Y	Ms. Lynn Bradley (Guest)	TNI
Y	Ms. Cathy Chang (Guest)	Water Environment Federation

## **Attachment C**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the September 2012 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. Shields will send a description of the Workgroups to the Board members via email. The Board members will send their three Workgroup choices in order of preference to Ms. Shields via email.
3. Ms. Shields will provide an overview email to the Board members regarding the three documents that ELAB will approve via email following final editorial review: the Board's response to public comments received about national accreditation the draft cover letter to the Dr. Michael Shapiro (EPA) regarding ELAB's recommendations on national accreditation, and the website layout regarding the national accreditation documents and relevant minutes. The website layout document will include the dates of the meetings at which the relevant documents were approved.
4. The Board will develop a recommendation to EPA that appropriate SW-846 methods should be approved for wastewater analysis; the Measurement and Technology Workgroup was assigned to investigate the issue.

**Attachment D**

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on October 17, 2012.



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Signature Chair

Ms. Aurora Shields

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Print Name Chair