

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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

Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

January 21, 2015; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB or Board) teleconference was held on January 21, 2015. 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. Patty Carvajal, Vice-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.

2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES

Ms. Carvajal asked whether any members had comments regarding the December teleconference minutes. Dr. Charlie Carter moved to accept the minutes, and Dr. Henry Leibovitz seconded the motion. The Board approved the December minutes unanimously with no changes.

3. OPENING REMARKS AND NEWS

Ms. Phelps noted that Ms. Susan Mazur and Ms. Cindy Nettrour have resigned from the Board. The resignations have not disrupted the membership balance, but it will be necessary to determine whether the absences have a negative impact on ELAB's ability to manage and complete its tasks. If so, new Board members will need to be appointed via the established process.

The Board has the authority to create and implement policies with which to govern itself, provided that they do not conflict with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. For example, ELAB instituted email voting procedures within the past few years. Ms. Phelps noted that there has been confusion regarding what constitutes "active participation." To reduce this confusion, she, Ms. Carvajal and Ms. Patsy Root discussed the possibility of implementing an ELAB attendance/participation policy. Dr. Carter agreed that an attendance/participation policy was sensible and necessary, particularly because ELAB involves voluntary participation.

Ms. Carvajal asked about the status of the ELAB website updates. Ms. Phelps responded that she would provide an update at the upcoming face-to-face meeting because transitions within the office responsible for the website have caused delays in publishing ELAB's material.

4. FEBRUARY FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Ms. Carvajal noted that the agenda for the upcoming face-to-face meeting would be finalized soon, and she provided an overview of the ELAB PowerPoint slides that will be presented at the face-to-face meeting. She welcomed comments about the slides from the Board members. Task Group leaders who have not provided their updates for the slides must send them to her as soon as possible. The face-to-face meeting will be 2 hours in length. In response to a Board member's question, Ms. Carvajal explained that the amount of audience participation depends on the topics that are introduced; some topics create significantly more discussion than others.

Dr. Leibovitz asked whether there was a difference in participation between the summer and winter meetings. Ms. Phelps said that three times as many participants attend the summer meeting compared to the winter meeting, but when there are issues important to the environmental laboratory community, participation in the winter discussions is similar to the summer meetings.

5. UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Method Update Rule (MUR)

Ms. Root reported that the MUR release has been delayed and will not be published until the end of January or beginning of February. EPA personnel may be able to provide additional information at the upcoming face-to-face meeting.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

Dr. Mahesh Pujari explained that he had spoken to Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA), who is excited that the Board is exploring PCB methods. Mr. Hanley, who has applied for a grant to explore Method 1668 via a contract laboratory, would like ELAB to explore a method that is simpler than Method 1668. Mr. Hanley has suggested that the Board's work on PCBs should wait until more information about the grant status is known. Dr. Carter asked for clarification that Mr. Hanley would provide the Board with guidance if the Agency receives the grant. Dr. Pujari confirmed this.

Dr. Leibovitz thought that an approach could be to explore a method similar to Method 8082. Dr. Pujari agreed, noting that Mr. Hanley had mentioned a method using quadrupole gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS). Dr. Carter asked about a single quadrupole select ion monitoring method for PCBs (Method 680) that had been developed in the 1980s or 1990s with the advantage of increased selectivity. Dr. Pujari was not familiar with this method, only Method 8082. He was unsure whether the appropriate sensitivity could be reached using a quadrupole method. Mr. Michael Flournoy noted that, depending on the specific requirements, there are limitations to using a single quadrupole method. Some laboratories have performed a good deal of congener analysis with GC/MS and GC, sometimes using multiple instrumentation for different congeners. Affordability is another consideration. He has contemplated using a hybrid method, with the Method 1668 extraction and clean-up procedures, and parlaying this into a GC method in an attempt to minimize or eliminate interferences as much as possible. Dr. Pujari thought that this would be a good approach, but EPA's efforts will depend on whether the Agency receives the grant.

Mr. Flournoy asked about the specific goal of the Task Group. Dr. Pujari responded that one goal is to streamline the language in Method 1668, but the ultimate goal, per his discussions with Mr. Hanley, is to identify a simpler method that can be used universally in laboratories.

Mr. Flournoy asked whether Dr. Pujari has attempted to use a Method 1668 analytical column on a GC with an electron capture detector; being able to separate the compounds is key. Dr. Pujari said that the method does not work as well as described in the paper. These specifics can be discussed by the Task Group.

Dr. Jim Seiber asked whether the main focus was on water or whether other substrates would be included as well. Dr. Pujari replied that currently water is the main focus.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Dallas Wait explained that the Task Group met via teleconference 2 weeks prior and discussed its directive. ELAB was asked to identify three to five methods across EPA offices that could be harmonized. The Board has provided comments on a variety of methods in recent years, including some related to harmonization, and the Task Group is reviewing the prior comments. These methods most likely will not be included in the identified list because the Board already has recommended them for harmonization. The group currently is compiling the list of potential methods and will provide the final Board-approved list to the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM).

Dr. Wait referred the ELAB members to the document that he had sent via email just prior to the teleconference, which included tables outlining potential methods as well as a list of the types of methods that the Task Group will examine. The Board members agreed with the Task Group's approach. Dr. Wait stated that the Board members could provide suggestions for methods that the Task Group should explore. Also, the Task Group currently has five members, and another member would be appreciated. Ms. Aurora Shields requested that any Board members aware of existing tables provide them to the Task Group. Dr. Carter thought that TestAmerica, Inc. may have some method comparisons written up and will explore this possibility.

Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF)/Data Quality Objectives (DQO) Process

Dr. Leibovitz stated that this Task Group (including Dr. Leibovitz, Dr. Kitty Kong, Ms. Carvajal and Dr. Wait) had met for the first time the prior day. The Task Group has read the original letter regarding this topic from ELAB to EPA, dated July 29, 2014. The IDQTF is a group comprising representatives from EPA and the U.S. Departments of Defense and Energy. The Task Group's focus is on addressing the concern that laboratories are not included in the DQO process, and the group plans to request a meeting with the IDQTF to discuss how laboratories can be included in this process and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) development. The recommendation is that the guidance encourage the project managers to take advantage of laboratory technical expertise when developing QAPPs. Additionally, the Task Group has several questions about the current IDQTF guidance. The group may need assistance from Ms. Phelps to identify the appropriate IDQTF contact(s).

Dr. Carter provided an anecdotal story about the reasons laboratories often are not involved in the process, including unreasonable requests and deadlines. Dr. Leibovitz noted that the Task

Group had discussed the bidding process; the conclusion was that project managers must understand the laboratories' expertise and provide enough time for laboratories to be involved prior to QAPP finalization. Dr. Wait agreed that this is one of many issues contributing to the problem; some can be controlled, whereas others cannot. Ms. Silky Labie stated that the IDQTF is one of the few organizations that have considered including laboratories in the planning stages. During the previous ELAB face-to-face meeting, Ms. Marlene Moore (Advanced Systems, Inc.) said that the group was more aware of the need for laboratory interaction than most other groups. Ms. Labie explained that the original ELAB letter was meant to introduce ELAB to the IDQTF. Ms. Root agreed that the letter was an introduction and a request to work with the IDQTF.

Ms. Root thought that the Agency was considering this issue and asked about FEM involvement. Ms. Phelps explained that the IDQTF has been in place for some time and was formed to join federal agencies in a more consistently agreed-on process, especially for handling multi-agency issues. The IDQTF developed a website devoted to all of its efforts. This has never been an active FEM issue; the FEM was informed of the IDQTF effort but was not asked to be actively involved. Ms. Phelps will need to research the most appropriate personnel for the Task Group to contact. In response to a question from Ms. Phelps and Ms. Root, Ms. Kristen LeBaron noted that the original letter was sent to Ms. Ellen Treimel (EPA) and Mr. Reggie Cheatham (EPA). Ms. Phelps explained that Mr. Cheatham is no longer involved with the effort. A Board member stated that the IDQTF website indicates that Mr. Jim Woolford (EPA) is the current IDQTF chair. Ms. Phelps knows him well and will contact him.

Dr. Leibovitz wondered whether the letter should be shared at the face-to-face meeting. Ms. Phelps suggested sharing the letter's content but not the addressees. Ms. Labie noted that this topic had generated a great deal of discussion at the previous face-to-face meeting, including many examples of laboratories being excluded from the DQO process.

Qualification of Drinking Water Data

Ms. Carvajal noted that the Task Group met for the first time via teleconference the prior week. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides specific instructions on how to request the submission of qualified data, and the concern is that the DEP does not actually want qualified data, which places laboratories in a precarious position of performing unnecessary analyses. Ms. Phelps forwarded additional information that morning that the Task Group can consider. The next steps are to research and gather more information. Dr. Leibovitz thought that this was another topic that would generate a significant amount of discussion at the face-to-face meeting.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy has been reviewing the issues related to in-line and on-line monitoring that were introduced at the past face-to-face meeting and will schedule a Task Group meeting soon. The current number of Task Group members (seven) surpasses the quorum of the new Board, and one member must be removed; this applies to any Task Group with seven members.

6. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

No new topics were introduced.

7. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

Ms. LeBaron reviewed the action items identified during the meeting, which are included in Attachment C. Ms. Phelps polled the Board members about their attendance at the face-to-face meeting.

8. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD

Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

January 21, 2015; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Approval of December Minutes	Carvajal/Root
Opening Remarks	Phelps
Reorganize Task Groups	Carvajal
Updates on Current Topics	All
Method Update Rule: Root	
Polychlorinated Biphenyls: Pujari	
Methods Harmony: Wait	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives Process: Leibovitz	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Carvajal	
Qualification of Drinking Water Data: Flournoy	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Carvajal/Root/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Carvajal/Root

Attachment B**MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS****ELAB TELECONFERENCE****January 21, 2015; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EST**

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Patsy Root (Chair)	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) M. Carvajal (Vice-Chair)	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Ms. Lara P. Phelps, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Dr. Charles (Charlie) Carter	TestAmerica, Inc. Representing: TestAmerica, Inc.
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Representing: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Y	Mr. Michael Flournoy	Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
Y	Mr. Keith Greenaway	ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board Representing: The NELAC Institute
Y	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) S. Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third-Party Assessors
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
Y	Dr. Mahesh P. Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
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	Ms. Michelle L. Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait	Gradient Corporation Representing: Consumer Products Industry

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Ms. Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky (EPA ASPPH Fellow)	EPA
Y	Mr. Steve Geis (Guest)	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Y	Ms. Penny Shamblin (Guest)	Hunton & Williams, LLP

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the December 2014 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Task Group leaders who have not provided their updates for the face-to-face meeting PowerPoint slides need to send them to Ms. Carvajal as soon as possible.
3. Dr. Pujari will continue to follow up with Mr. Hanley about ELAB's potential PCB efforts.
4. Dr. Carter will determine whether TestAmerica, Inc. has available method comparisons and provide them to the Methods Harmonization Task Group.
5. Ms. Phelps will contact Mr. Woolford regarding the IDQTF/DQO process effort.
6. Ms. Carvajal will add Ms. Labie to the Task Group devoted to the IDQTF/DQO process.
7. Task Group leaders will ensure that their groups do not contain more than six members.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on January 21, 2015.



Signature Chair

Ms. Patsy Root

Print Name Chair