

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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

Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#

June 18, 2014; 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 18, 2014. 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, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Ms. Root asked whether any members had comments regarding the May minutes. Although Dr. Dallas Wait thought that he was responsible for the action item regarding the methods harmonization letter, Ms. Kristen LeBaron was responsible for and had acted on that item. Mr. Dave Speis moved to accept the minutes with no changes, and Dr. Mahesh Pujari seconded the motion. The Board approved the May minutes unanimously with no discussion and three abstentions.

3. UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Ms. Root reported that she had spoken with Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) regarding the Methods Update Rule (MUR). The proposed MUR will be published within the first 2 weeks of July. The Board is welcome to provide comments, but if they are substantive, they might not be addressed during this MUR cycle. If the Board's letter regarding acrolein and acrylonitrile can be finished in a timely manner, it may be considered during the update.

Ms. Root had edited the acrolein and acrylonitrile letter in an effort to simplify the letter and format it as a request; she had provided her edits to the Task Group. Ms. Root was unsure whether the DuPont study is appropriate to share with EPA. Dr. Pujari explained his plans to review the edits and resend the letter to the Board. He noted that Method 603 is sensitive, but the gas chromatography methods can be misleading. Method 624 is a much superior method. He wondered whether the Board could suggest strongly that EPA remove Method 603 from the rule. Ms. Root was unaware of an instance in which the Agency subtracted a method from a rule. Mr. Speis said that SW-846 methods have been removed in the past, but this is an unusual occurrence. Dr. Burrows noted that some methods had been removed from 40 CFR 136. Mr. Speis explained that the SW-846 and 40 CFR 136 situations were different than Dr. Pujari's

request because the Agency substituted a consensus-based method similar to the EPA method. Ms. Aurora Shields commented that if Method 603 creates issues with sensitivity, it needed to be demonstrated.

Dr. Jim Seiber asked how often Method 603 is used. Mr. Speis said that some clients request that it be used because it is mentioned in their permits. As a result, although the laboratory attempts to negotiate in favor of other methods, sometimes Method 603 must be used. ELAB could suggest that the Agency remove the sentence from Method 624 that recommends the use of Method 603. Ms. Shields asked how often EPA substitutes methods, and Ms. Root explained that this was the question that she was addressing when she made her edits to the letter. Dr. Pujari explained that the main goal of the letter is to remove the pH requirement.

In response to a question from Ms. Root, Dr. Burrows commented that he agreed with her edits. He explained that the preservation requirement of pH 4–5 for acrolein and acrylonitrile has been removed from SW-846 Update V, Chapter 4. Dr. Burrows said that the DuPont study is in EPA's docket, so it can be attached with ELAB's letter without express DuPont permission.

Dr. Pujari said that the pH requirement of pH 4–5 was not practical during field-sampling activities and provided too many difficulties to laboratories. Drs. Pujari and Burrows provided language about this issue that Ms. Root added directly to the letter during the teleconference.

Dr. Burrows moved that the Board approve the revised letter via email. Ms. Michelle Wade seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Dr. Pujari explained that he had not convened a Task Group meeting regarding the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) issue. He wondered whether the Task Group should focus on Method 1668 rather than Method 608. Mr. Speis thought that this was a question for the Task Group rather than the full Board. Mr. John Phillips thought that the Task Group should attempt to find alternatives to Method 1668, perhaps a modified Method 608. EPA's objective is to identify a method with a sensitivity between that of Methods 608 and 1668. It will be necessary to examine individual congeners.

Ms. Root asked about the rule's sensitivity requirement. Mr. Phillips responded that the permits contain these requirements. Some permits require "nondetects," in which case sensitivity does not matter. The Agency has stated that PCBs are ubiquitous, so it would like a more reliable value, as compared to Method 1668, for demonstrating compliance. Dr. Pujari said that adding PCB congeners to Method 608 could be an issue for the group to discuss. Ms. Root agreed that the Task Group should work together to identify the specific issues that ELAB can discuss with EPA. Dr. Pujari said that the group would begin discussing the topic so that there is progress to report at the July Board meeting.

In response to a question from Ms. Root about the Agency's timeline for this effort, Mr. Speis thought that this was a topic identified by the Board. Mr. Phillips explained that EPA's presentation about future MUR efforts had included this as an area of future focus. Ms. Root noted that ELAB had provided comments on Method 608 in 2013. The Board's comments on Methods 608, 624 and 625 may be addressed in the upcoming MUR.

Dr. Wait explained that the letter to the Agency regarding methods harmonization was formatted and edited by Ms. LeBaron and presented to the Board for comment. Ms. Root had provided several suggestions regarding the letter, which has been significantly revised and streamlined. Dr. Wait noted that ELAB could continue to consider the topics that were removed as it moves forward in discussions with EPA.

Mr. Phillips understands the political nature of the issue, but as an advisory committee, ELAB has a duty to respectfully inform EPA of areas that the Agency can improve. Ms. Root agreed, noting that she envisioned meeting with EPA staff members during the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in August 2014, which would provide the opportunity to introduce additional methods harmonization topics. Mr. Speis saw both sides of the issue and endorsed Ms. Root's approach; he still is concerned about the Agency's receptiveness to this effort. Discussing additional details in a face-to-face format would be beneficial. Dr. Mike Wichman agreed that the dialogue would move forward more productively in person versus outlining all of the topics in a letter. Mr. Phillips saw the benefits of this. His concern was that not including all of the topics in the letter could make it appear as though the Board did not understand the issues, but ELAB's discussions of these issues have been documented in the meeting minutes.

Dr. Wait will be attending the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation and, therefore, is able to attend a face-to-face meeting. Ms. Shields commented that it is essential to explain to EPA that this issue is important to the environmental laboratory community, and the Board must supply the specific reasons regarding why it is so important. Dr. Wait thought that most of the EPA staff members who attended the January teleconference had appeared receptive, with only one person providing some "pushback." Ms. Root agreed that there are many opportunities to streamline methods for the environmental laboratory community and the community that it serves, but it is difficult to focus on everything at once. Selecting one or two items on which to focus will initiate the dialogue, and ELAB can introduce more topics in the future. Ms. Shields noted that it will be difficult for the Agency to address harmonization based on how it operates and agreed that it is necessary to start with one or two specific issues before moving forward with a broader effort.

Ms. Root updated the letter based on language suggested during the teleconference and will send the revised letter to the Board members. Mr. Speis moved that the Board review the revised methods harmonization letter and approve it via an email vote. Dr. Wichman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Root reported that Ms. Lara Phelps will share any updates on the field testing memorandum during the Board's July meeting.

Ms. Shields said that the Task Group regarding the Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF) and data quality objectives has drafted and is reviewing a letter to the IDQTF Chair. The letter is designed to invite a dialogue on the issue between the two groups. The next step will be to present the letter for ELAB comment; the goal is for the Board to discuss the letter at its July meeting.

4. AGENDA FOR AUGUST FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Ms. Root explained that the next ELAB face-to-face meeting would occur as a session at the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation. The session is scheduled for 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 4, 2014.

The following items will be included on the draft face-to-face meeting agenda that Ms. Root will develop: the Board's current topics, items finalized since the January 2014 meeting, and a discussion of new topics. Dr. Wichman appreciated sufficient time for the participants to introduce and discuss issues. Mr. Phillips would like the Task Groups to meet during the meeting.

Ms. Wade, Ms. Ruth Forman and Ms. Shields will be unavailable to attend the face-to-face meeting in person but will attend via teleconference. Dr. Wichman was unsure whether he could attend in person. Ms. LeBaron will be present on Monday only in terms of scheduling any Task Group meetings that the members would like her to attend. Ms. Phelps has obtained permission in the past for her to attend additional days for Task Group meetings, but Ms. LeBaron was unsure whether this would be possible within current budget constraints.

5. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dr. Wichman noted that Ms. Phelps had been awarded the Association of Public Health Laboratories On the Front Line Award.

Dr. Seiber stated that if Board members have summer job opportunities or internships for students, he can advertise them at his university. Although most opportunities have been filled, some students still are interested in summer employment/internships.

6. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

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

7. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Phillips moved to close the meeting, and Dr. Wichman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
Monthly Teleconference: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
June 21, 2014; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

Opening Remarks	Root
Approval of May Minutes	Root
Updates on Current Topics	All
Method Update Rule	
Acrylonitrile and acrolein	
Polychlorinated Biphenyls	
Methods Harmony	
Field Testing	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives Process	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Root
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Wade/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjourn	Root

Attachment B**MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS****ELAB TELECONFERENCE****June 18, 2014; 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
N	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
N	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
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	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. Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky	EPA, representing Ms. Lara Phelps
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the May 2014 meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. Root will forward the revised letter regarding the acrolein and acrylonitrile issue to the Board members, who will vote to approve it no later than Monday, June 23, 2014.
3. Once the acrolein and acrylonitrile letter is approved, Ms. LeBaron will format and edit it as soon as possible.
4. Dr. Pujari will schedule a PCB Task Group meeting prior to the July ELAB meeting.
5. Ms. Root will forward the revised letter regarding methods harmonization to the Board members, who will vote to approve it no later than Monday, June 23, 2014.
6. Once the methods harmonization letter is approved, Ms. LeBaron will format and edit it as soon as possible.
7. Ms. Root will draft an agenda for the face-to-face meeting and send it to the Board members by the end of June 2014.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on June 18, 2014.



Signature Chair

Ms. Patsy Root

Print Name Chair