

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
June 17, 2015; 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 17, 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. ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Patty Carvajal, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky, acting for Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called an official roll of the Board members and guests.

2. OPENING REMARKS FROM THE DFO

Ms. McIntosh-Kastrinsky indicated that there were no DFO updates.

3. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Ms. Carvajal asked whether any members had comments regarding the Board's May meeting minutes; no comments were offered. Dr. Henry Leibovitz moved to accept the minutes, and Mr. Michael Flournoy seconded the motion. ELAB approved the May minutes unanimously with no discussion.

4. UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Methods Update Rule (MUR)

Ms. Patsy Root explained there had been no additional EPA action since the MUR comment period had closed, but the Agency might provide an update during the Board's face-to-face meeting. Dr. Leibovitz noted that other organizations appreciated that the various MUR comments were shared among them; the number of similar comments provided confidence that there is a strong argument for the concerns expressed by the organizations. Ms. Carvajal appreciated other organizations' willingness to share their comments with ELAB.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Dallas Wait explained that the Task Group had not met since the previous ELAB meeting, but he had completed his reviews of the tables devoted to herbicide and metals by inductively

coupled plasma methods. He will be sending these reviews to the Task Group for comments. Ms. Aurora Shields has completed her review of two tables and will be sharing them with the Task Group. The next step will be to finish reviewing the remaining tables (including fluoride) and discuss them among the group. Dr. Wait will develop his PowerPoint slides for the face-to-face meeting.

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

Dr. Leibovitz reported that he, Dr. Kitty Kong and Ms. Phelps had met with Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy) of the IDQTF regarding the concerns identified in the Board's original letter on the topic, which was written approximately 1 year ago. During this meeting, Dr. Adelson provided information about IDQTF's organization and the laboratory-contracting process. Dr. Leibovitz has captured this information and Dr. Adelson's comments on his PowerPoint slides for the face-to-face meeting. One point captured on the slides is that the Department of Defense contracts "prime" contractors (e.g., environmental engineering companies), which in turn contract the laboratories. The IDQTF recommends that laboratories concerned about not being included earlier in the DQO process establish better communication with prime contractors and obtain a better understanding of project requirements.

Qualification of Drinking Water Data

Ms. Carvajal reported that the Task Group had met with Office of Water (OW) staff to discuss this issue, including the concern about data needing to be "perfect" (i.e., not having any quality control [QC] qualifiers). Other concerns include public health and public perception of qualified data. Laboratories must report directly to the states, so they are put in a position of evaluating their own work, which introduces conflict. EPA wants essentially perfect data, which conflicts with The NELAC Institute's (TNI) practice of including all information about how data points are produced in the analytical report.

Dr. Leibovitz commented that, with the incentive to become ISO 17025 accredited, there has been a good deal of discussion about uncertainty measurements. He wondered whether the Agency is considering a future in which measurement uncertainty will be a reporting requirement. Reporting the uncertainty measurement associated with data may resolve the issue of qualified data. He would like to know whether OW has given any thought to avoiding the use of qualifiers by providing information about the data.

Ms. Carvajal explained that she had drafted a letter to OW, thanking staff members for discussing the issue with the Task Group. She would like the group to meet with OW staff to further discuss the issue during the face-to-face meeting. Mr. Flournoy thought that the letter addresses the question and agreed with Dr. Leibovitz that uncertainty measurements can help understand reported data. Ms. Carvajal added that one Agency concern was the potential that some laboratories perhaps would not address QC issues, which also would fall under the realm of uncertainty. Mr. Flournoy noted that most drinking water agencies do not use raw data, but a requirement to provide raw data could help agencies understand the entire data set.

Dr. Leibovitz stated that Dr. Adelson will be present at all but the first day of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference in Chicago and suggested that he be invited to the

meeting with OW. Dr. Adelson has expressed an interest in meeting ELAB members and answering any questions that they may have.

The Board discussed the draft letter to OW, with Ms. Carvajal making changes suggested by the ELAB members directly to the document in AdobeConnect. Ms. Root moved that the revised letter be sent to Ms. Phelps following editorial review by Ms. Kristen LeBaron. Dr. Leibovitz seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy explained that the Task Group has captured enough information to develop a conclusion about the issue; he has sent the document, including suggestions, to the Board members. The biggest question is whether monitors could yield equivalent QC-type data to show the known quality of the monitors. Where this is applicable, is EPA willing to forgo some of its criteria to obtain continuous data? In some cases, it may be the onus of the Agency to determine specific limits that protect human health but allow continuous monitoring technology, whereas in other cases the onus may be on the manufacturers to find ways to meet the criteria. Ms. Carvajal asked which states currently are using this technology for compliance. Mr. Flournoy responded that some states are using the technology for temperature or flow, but the technology is not being used for the general analyticals for compliance. Industry would like to use the technology for compliance because it is less expensive in the long-term, but there are concerns about whether the quality will meet the analytical specifications that laboratories can achieve. Whether this effort is a long-term process will depend on feedback from EPA, laboratories and industry. Current monitoring technology is not built to compete with the analytical capabilities of laboratories.

5. NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Ms. Carvajal provided an overview of the agenda and PowerPoint presentation for the Board's July face-to-face meeting, making changes as suggested by ELAB members. Ms. Root will provide additional information about the Board's previous year's activities to Ms. Carvajal to be included in the presentation.

Following the presentation of the slide devoted to the qualification of drinking water data, the Board further discussed the issue. The ELAB members agreed that the crux of the issue was confidence: Does EPA have confidence in laboratories, and do laboratories have confidence in their data? The laboratory accreditation program will identify the minority of laboratories in which confidence should not be placed. Electronic data review can be implemented without needing qualified data. A common ground between EPA requirements and TNI practices should be identified, and this common ground may be measurement uncertainties.

6. WRAP-UP/REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

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

7. CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Flournoy moved to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Wait seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
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Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Carvajal/LeBaron
Opening Remarks From DFO	Phelps
Approval of May Minutes	Carvajal
Updates on Current Topics	All
Method Update Rule (MUR): Root	
Methods Harmony: Wait	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives Process: Leibovitz	
Qualification of Drinking Water Data: Carvajal	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Carvajal
July Face-to-Face Meeting Agenda	
PowerPoint Presentation	
Wrap-Up/Review Action Items	Carvajal/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Carvajal

Attachment B**MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS****ELAB TELECONFERENCE****June 17, 2015; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EDT**

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal (Chair)	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Vice- Chair)	Gradient Corporation Representing: Consumer Products Industry
N	Ms. Lara Phelps, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
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
N	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) 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
N	Dr. Mahesh Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
Y	Ms. Patsy Root	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
N	Ms. Michelle Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies

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	Ms. Virginia Blanton (Guest)	Via AdobeConnect
Y	Mr. Phil Worby (Guest)	Accutest Laboratories

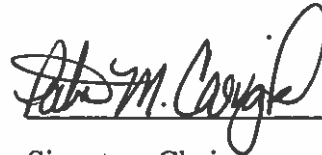
Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the May meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. LeBaron will edit the letter to OW and return it to Ms. Carvajal to forward to Ms. Phelps.
3. Mr. Wait will provide Ms. Carvajal with updated PowerPoint slides for the face-to-face meeting as soon as possible.
4. Ms. Root will provide Ms. Carvajal with additional information about the Board's previous year's activities.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on June 17, 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty M. Carvajal", written over a horizontal line.

Signature Chair

Ms. Patty Carvajal

Print Name Chair