

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
September 21, 2016; 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 September 21, 2016. 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.

**ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Dr. Dallas Wait, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants and guests to the teleconference. Ms. Kristen LeBaron called the roll of the Board members and guests.

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES**

Dr. Wait asked for comments regarding the Board's August meeting minutes, other than the edits submitted by Dr. Mike Delaney via email, which prompted clarification of two comments made by Mr. Dave Speis (Eurofins QC, Inc.). Dr. Henry Leibovitz moved to accept the minutes with Dr. Delaney's changes and Mr. Speis' clarified comments; Dr. Mahesh Pujari seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the August minutes with two abstentions.

**OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO**

Ms. Phelps thanked the incoming ELAB members for attending this meeting, noting that the official membership paperwork should be processed within the next week. If the paperwork is processed by Friday, September 23, 2016, as planned, it will be sent via regular mail the following week. The Board will comprise seven returning members and nine new members. An administrative call for the incoming Board has been scheduled for October 6, 2016. Dr. Wait is unable to attend the call, so Dr. Leibovitz will chair the meeting in his absence.

Ms. Phelps explained that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed the first part of its periodic evaluation of EPA Federal Advisory Committees that mention science or research within their charters. She received the OIG report on ELAB the prior day, and the report indicates that the OIG is moving on to the second part of its evaluation.

**UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS**

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

Dr. Leibovitz summarized the IDQTF/DQO effort for the incoming members, explaining that the IDQTF represents EPA, the U.S. Department of Defense and other agencies. ELAB began exploring this topic because the environmental laboratory community had concerns regarding laboratory involvement in the DQO process and wondered whether the IDQTF could help laboratories be included earlier in the process. The process, however, is dictated by the Federal

Acquisition Regulation. After learning this, the Board provided recommendations to the Agency on how to promote earlier laboratory engagement in the DQO process.

In response to a question from Dr. Leibovitz, Ms. Phelps explained that the IDQTF meeting that ELAB had been invited to attend via teleconference has not been scheduled yet. She will ensure that Dr. Jordan Adelson, Chair of the IDQTF, informs the Board when the meeting has been scheduled.

### *Methods Harmonization*

Dr. Wait summarized the methods harmonization task for the incoming members. In the past, ELAB has consistently encouraged EPA to harmonize quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) criteria among its methods. At a meeting between the Board and EPA staff approximately 2 years earlier, EPA suggested that ELAB provide specific suggestions for a few methods in need of harmonization. During the spring of 2016, the Board provided recommendations to the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) on how to harmonize the QA/QC elements of six different methods. This task has been tabled until ELAB receives further instruction from the Agency.

Ms. Phelps explained that the FEM has been reaching out to staff and leadership with the appropriate expertise to respond appropriately to the recommendations. The FEM is finalizing its response and hopes to send it to ELAB by the Board's October meeting. In response to a question from Dr. Wait regarding the FEM's thoughts on the topic, Ms. Phelps commented that the FEM hopes to establish a long-term process to obtain this type of input from ELAB. Some barriers (e.g., budget, regulatory review schedules) prevent some actions from being taken. For example, a method may come up for review within the Office of Water but not in the Office of Land and Emergency Management, making harmonization difficult; therefore, a careful balancing act always will be in place to allow EPA to make changes. The FEM found the Board's recommendations extremely helpful. The FEM's response will include office-specific comments on some of the recommendations.

### *In-Line and On-Line Monitoring*

In Mr. Michael Flournoy's absence, Ms. Silky Labie reported that the Task Group has not met since the face-to-face meeting and is awaiting the input that various individuals and entities had promised to provide regarding QA/QC issues that should be considered in allowing in-line and on-line monitoring for compliance. She provided background on the issue for the incoming members, explaining that ELAB began this effort at the request of the environmental laboratory community. The Task Group has explored the issue with the help of EPA staff and external experts.

Ms. Deb Waller (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection), incoming ELAB member, asked for clarification about whether on-line monitoring refers to the use of field instruments that send real-time data to a laboratory computer. Ms. Labie explained that some facilities currently have in-line monitors that are read manually to measure residual chlorine, but the data are used to monitoring the quality of the effluent and chlorine levels.

Ms. Sharon Mertens (Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District), incoming ELAB member, asked whether the Task Group was exploring specific matrices. Ms. Labie said that the focus is on wastewater, which was the focus of the original request.

### ***Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)***

Dr. Delaney explained for the incoming members that the SIM topic arose from the environmental laboratory community at ELAB's August 2014 face-to-face meeting. In response to a letter from the Board, EPA had indicated that it was interested in exploring this topic, so the Board established a Task Group to investigate the minimum criteria needed for use of SIM methods. In response to comments received at the August 2016 face-to-face meeting, Dr. Delaney revised the minimum criteria developed by the Task Group. The group members have reviewed these revised criteria.

Dr. Delaney has provided to the Board members a written explanation, based on comments made by Mr. Speis during the Board's August 2016 face-to-face meeting, of the rationale for using the 20 percent abundance range, which was derived from Method 524.3.

Dr. Delaney also has provided to the ELAB members the SIM minimum criteria developed by the Task Group and the accompanying draft letter to EPA. Dr. Wait recalled that during the August face-to-face meeting, ELAB devised a plan to wait until the new Board convened in October to vote on the documents because new expertise would be available. New ELAB members will be able to review the material when the new Board officially commences on October 15, 2016. The Task Group can provide the background materials to the new ELAB members prior to October 15 so that they can immediately review them in anticipation of discussing this topic during the Board's October meeting on October 19, 2016.

### ***Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing***

Dr. Wait reported that the Task Group has developed its suggestions regarding The NELAC Institute's (TNI) WET Expert Committee white paper, but a plan was devised during the August face-to-face meeting to approve the suggestions when the new Board convened in October. He explained for the incoming members that TNI had requested that ELAB review the WET white paper and provide a letter of support. The Board formed a Task Group that reviewed the paper and developed suggestions. Because Dr. Wait will be absent during the October meeting when the new Board discusses this issue, Dr. Leibovitz will lead the discussion.

### ***Cyanide Methodology***

Dr. Delaney explained that ELAB had decided to establish a Task Group in October when the new Board convenes. He explained that the concern prompting this effort is false positive cyanide detects and drinking water reporting.

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

Dr. Wait explained that a participant at the August face-to-face meeting had raised the issue of conflicting information and approaches to using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry spectral libraries. ELAB determined that it would address the issue and establish a Task Group when the

new Board convenes in October. Dr. Pujari noted that the topic is broad. Initially, the libraries were based on quadrupole; currently, all technologies must be considered. Dr. Wait agreed that the established Task Group will need to define the scope of the effort.

Dr. Delaney reminded the Board that it had agreed to explore issues surrounding the WET Test of Significant Toxicity. ELAB will discuss this issue during its October meeting.

Ms. Phelps asked the ELAB members who had served the maximum of 6 years whether the new Board should revisit any previous topics. Ms. Aurora Shields did not think that the incoming Board needed to revisit any of the issues that she had seen addressed during her tenure. The current issues are important and what ELAB should focus on. She will miss everyone and thanked them for their efforts and support. Ms. Patsy Root agreed that there were no issues that she would revisit. During her tenure, the Board improved its proactive communication with EPA, and she encouraged ELAB to continue to be proactive. She thanked everyone for working together to address issues. Ms. Labie echoed the comments of Ms. Shields and Ms. Root. She thought that most issues have been resolved or are heading toward resolution. During her tenure, ELAB's relationship with the Agency became more of a partnership, and communication has increased between the two groups. She encouraged the Board to continue on this path and thanked everyone for the memories and hard work.

#### **WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

Drs. Wait and Leibovitz thanked Ms. Shields, Ms. Root and Ms. Labie for their service to the Board.

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

#### **CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Root moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Shields and Ms. Labie seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

**Attachment A**

**AGENDA**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#**  
**September 21, 2016; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EDT**

Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Wait/LeBaron
Approval of Prior Minutes	Wait
Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO	Phelps
Updates on Current Topics	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective Process: Leibovitz	
Methods Harmonization: Wait	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing: Carvajal	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Wait
GC/MS Spectral Libraries	
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Wait/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Wait

**Attachment B****PARTICIPANTS LIST****Board Members**

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Chair)	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz (Vice-Chair)	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
Y	Ms. Lara Phelps (DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Ms. Lu-Ann Kleibacker (Alternate DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
N	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Representing: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
N	Mr. Michael Flournoy	Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
Y	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
Y	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third-Party Assessors
Y	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

## PARTICIPANTS LIST (CONT)

### Contractors and Guests

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Mr. Brad Meadows (Guest)	BSK Associates
Y	Ms. Sharon Mertens (Guest)	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Y	Ms. Debra (Deb) Waller (Guest)	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



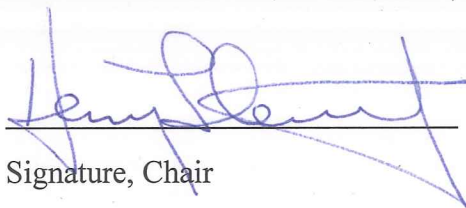
## Attachment C

### ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the August meeting minutes and send them to Ms. Phelps via email.
2. Ms. Phelps will follow up with Dr. Adelson to ensure that ELAB has the information about the upcoming IDQTF meeting.
3. Dr. Delaney will provide the new Board members with the SIM background materials so that they can begin to review them on October 15.
4. Dr. Wait will send the WET white paper to the new ELAB members so that they can begin to review them on October 15.

5. **Attachment D**

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on September 21, 2016.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry Leibovitz", written over a horizontal line.

Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Vice-Chair