

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
February 15, 2017; 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 February 15, 2017. 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

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 JANUARY MINUTES

Dr. Wait asked for comments on the January minutes. Dr. Mahesh Pujari asked for clarification on page 3 regarding the question that asked, "Finally, how can manufacturers use validation for processes that are already defined in the method?" He did not think it should be framed as a question. Mr. Michael Flournoy, who had presented the question during the January face-to-face meeting, was not present to provide clarification. The Board members agreed that the minutes should not be changed because they accurately reflect the meeting. Dr. Pujari moved to accept the minutes; Ms. Sharon Mertens seconded the motion. The Board members voted to approve the January minutes with one abstention. As a result of the abstention, a quorum was not present to approve the minutes. The minutes were not finalized and will be voted on during the March meeting, provided a quorum is present.

Dr. Henry Leibovitz asked whether he could share the minutes with an Association of Public Health Laboratories committee that had asked for an update of ELAB activities. Ms. Phelps indicated that he could provide a verbal update, but he could not circulate the minutes until they have been approved officially.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Ms. Phelps informed the Board that the clarification statement that her office had submitted to the Office of the Inspector General regarding its recent audit has been addressed. She will be able to share the final audit report once it is released. ELAB's website cannot be updated during the transition period for the new administration; Ms. Phelps is keeping track of all ELAB documents that need to be published when the communications freeze has been lifted. If any member needs a document in the meantime, Ms. Phelps can provide it on request.

TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

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

Dr. Leibovitz reported no updates from this group, but he still is hopeful that the previously discussed meeting with Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy) and other pertinent stakeholders will occur. Ms. Phelps will follow up with Dr. Adelson.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Wait explained that he was in the process of writing ELAB's response letter to the Agency.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy was unable to attend this call; no updates for this group were provided.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

In Dr. Mike Delaney's absence at the beginning of the teleconference, Dr. Wait explained that the Board needs to vote on the information that Dr. Delaney had circulated to the ELAB members at the beginning of February. He asked Ms. Phelps whether the information, which currently is in the format of an attachment, could be approved by the Board or whether the cover letter must be voted on at the same time. Ms. Phelps explained that the Board could vote on the attachment with the agreement that the cover letter would be voted on via email. As a result of members leaving the teleconference, a quorum was not present to vote on the attachment. The Board will vote on the cover letter that Dr. Delaney has drafted and the attachment during its March meeting.

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing

Dr. Wait asked Ms. Phelps how closely he should be working with The NELAC Institute's WET Expert Committee prior to the Board's approving the letter that endorses the committee's work and providing it to EPA. Ms. Phelps explained that external experts always may be included in Task Group and Board efforts at ELAB's discretion. Dr. Wait noted that he had shared the letter with the participants at the Board's recent face-to-face meeting, but he is willing to share the letter specifically with the Expert Committee before it is approved by ELAB.

Cyanide Methodology

In Dr. Delaney's absence, Dr. Leibovitz explained that the Task Group recently met and continues to review the documents and white papers that Dr. Delaney had distributed to the members. The Task Group plans to meet before the next ELAB meeting.

Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course

Ms. Mertens explained that the Task Group met the previous week and discussed the letter from the NELAP Accreditation Council and comments that the Task Group members had heard during the recent Forum on Environmental Accreditation. The next step will be to develop a

letter of endorsement for the NELAP Accreditation Council's letter for the Board to approve during its March meeting. Because the Task Group does not plan to meet again, Dr. Leibovitz will provide his input to Ms. Mertens via email.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) Spectral Libraries

Dr. Wait noted that the original issue raised during the Board's August 2016 face-to-face meeting was in regard to reference spectra within the GC/MS library. The issue relates to whether standards should be made for laboratories using general spectral libraries or whether laboratories should use reference spectra from a library that already has been established. The second issue that had been raised during ELAB's January face-to-face meeting was in regard to the use of Tentatively Identified Compound (TIC) information. Theoretically, the current guidance should address the use of TIC information, and the Board does not have a role in addressing this issue.

Dr. Pujari noted that this is a broad topic; Dr. Wait agreed, explaining that this is why the Board is trying to narrow down the focus. Dr. Pujari commented that EPA methods do not include the flexibility to use newer technologies. Dr. Leibovitz commented that the desire seems to be to modify methods, which causes the standard library to be invalid. In response to a question from Dr. Wait, Dr. Pujari explained that EPA has not provided guidance.

Because he had not been present at the face-to-face meeting, Dr. Leibovitz asked for clarification regarding the concern with TIC compounds and whether this concern was related to using the approved methods. He noted that no standard, national library for nonquadrupole methods exists. Dr. Pujari agreed and stated that the crux of the issue is allowing laboratories to use more sensitive instruments to perform the methods. Ms. Patti Carvajal wondered whether the situation could be explained in a letter to EPA, in which ELAB provides possible solutions.

Dr. Leibovitz thought that two different issues were being discussed. The first issue is whether laboratories can perform GC/MS analysis without doing a standard tune. The second issue is whether the standard methods are not flexible enough and require the use of the specified detector and tunes. If the latter is the case, then nothing can be done. He noted that Mr. Dave Speis (Retired) had indicated at a previous meeting that NELAP auditors cite laboratories for using the wrong library, but some laboratories are able to find ways around this by using older library versions, which gives them an unfair advantage. He thought that laboratories should be required to follow the approach expected by NELAP. Ms. Carvajal agreed that if this is an assessor issue, it always will be an issue. It also depends on the program.

Dr. Wait was unsure whether the Board could address this issue. Ms. Mertens was unsure how the Board could provide prescriptive recommendations because the issue stems from a guidance document rather than a regulation. Dr. Leibovitz thought that if the libraries are being misused, there could be an opportunity to provide education at national meetings so that they are used properly. Ms. Mertens wondered how ELAB could provide this recommendation because its recommendations must be to the Agency. Dr. Leibovitz said that the recommendation could be for EPA to encourage the national organizations that represent laboratories to sponsor or offer

workshops so that laboratories can stay current regarding proper techniques. Ms. Carvajal thought that the responsibility lies with the laboratories, which need to ensure that analysts are trained properly. Dr. Leibovitz thought that ELAB could recognize that this is a concern of the environmental laboratory community so that the Agency is aware that education is needed. Dr. Wait noted that ELAB usually provides specific recommendations rather than expressing general concerns. Dr. Leibovitz suggested that the Board could respond to its constituents, encouraging them to request training from relevant national organizations. Ms. Phelps explained that ELAB is welcome to bring any concerns of the environmental laboratory community to the attention of the Agency. Dr. Leibovitz volunteered to draft a letter outlining the concerns regarding GC/MS spectral libraries to EPA.

Dr. Wait explained that the second issue regarding GC/MS spectral libraries is the use of TIC information. As Mr. Speis explained during the January face-to-face meeting, the information is not necessarily qualitative or quantitative but still is used for decision making. Dr. Leibovitz said that, when providing a report using this information, laboratories should note that the data are not quantitative, or they should not report the information; it is not their jurisdiction if programs use the data for decision-making purposes. The Board agreed that it would not pursue this topic.

Additional Topics/Issues for Consideration

Mr. Elan Rieser explained that he had received some comments regarding the letter clarifying the punctuation error in Section 11.3 of Method 6010D. He will re-send the revised letter to the Board for consideration during the March meeting.

EXPLANATION OF THE CHAIR TRANSITION

Ms. Phelps explained that, per the established process, Dr. Leibovitz will assume the role of Chair from Dr. Wait at the March meeting, and the Board will nominate and vote on a Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will serve for 1 year and then serve as Chair for 1 year. Ms. Phelps will begin the nomination and voting process via email following the teleconference. Before nominating another Board member, ELAB members should ensure that the individual they would like to nominate is willing and able to serve for 2 years. Self-nominations are acceptable. Ms. Phelps is the only person who sees the nominations and the votes. In response to a request from Dr. Wait for those members who would like to exclude themselves from the nomination, Mr. Rieser excluded himself.

WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

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

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Delaney moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Carvajal seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
February 15, 2017; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST

Call to Order/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: Wait	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course: Mertens	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Wait
Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) Spectral Libraries	
Preparation of Reference Spectra Within the GC/MS Library	
Use of Tentatively Identified Compound Information	
Explanation of Chair Transition	Phelps
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Wait/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Wait

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS LIST
Board Members

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
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	Dr. Kim Anderson	Oregon State University Representing: Academia—Oregon State University
Y	Ms. Ann Bailey	EcoChem, Inc. Representing: EcoChem, Inc.
N	Dr. Brian Buckley	Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute Representing: Academia and Laboratory—Rutgers
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Representing: MWRA
N	Mr. Michael Flournoy	Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
N	Dr. Keri Hornbuckle	The University of Iowa Representing: Academia—The University of Iowa
N	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
N	Mr. Jeff Loewe	NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc.
N	Mr. Brad Meadows	BSK Associates Representing: Commercial Laboratory—BSK Associates
Y	Ms. Sharon Mertens	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Representing: The NELAC Institute
Y	Dr. Mahesh Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
Y	Mr. Elan Rieser	Con Edison Representing: Utility Water Act Group
N	Ms. Debra Waller	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Representing: State Government—NJDEP

PARTICIPANTS LIST (CONT.)
Contractors and Guests

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Mr. Joe Lapceovich (Guest)	First Energy

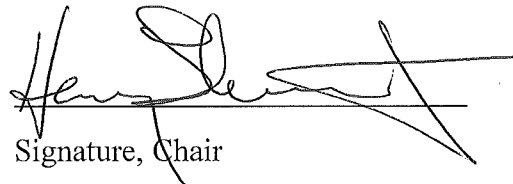
Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. The Board will vote on the January meeting minutes during its March meeting, provided a quorum is present.
2. Ms. Phelps will follow up with Dr. Adelson regarding a meeting to discuss the inclusion of laboratories earlier in the DQO process.
3. Dr. Leibovitz will provide his input regarding the Drinking Water Certification Officer's Training Course to Ms. Mertens via email.
4. Dr. Leibovitz will draft a letter outlining the concerns about GC/MS spectral libraries to EPA; Dr. Pujari will provide input.
5. Mr. Rieser will re-send to the Board members the revised letter clarifying the punctuation error in Section 11.3 of Method 6010D.
6. Ms. Phelps will begin the nomination process for Vice Chair via email.
7. *Outstanding action item from January 2017 carried over as the result of a lack of quorum:* The Board will review and vote on the SIM letter and criteria during its March meeting.
8. *Outstanding action item from December 2016:* Dr. Wait will compose a one-page letter addressing EPA's response on the Board's methods harmonization recommendations and distribute the letter to the Task Group and ELAB.
9. *Outstanding action item from November 2016:* The Board will determine whether it will form a Task Group to review the Independent Laboratories Institute's document regarding the addition of microwave and interference-resolving technologies to Method 200.8.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on February 15, 2017.



Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Chair