

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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

UPDATE ABOUT CHAIR TRANSITION

Dr. Henry Leibovitz, Vice-Chair of ELAB, chaired the meeting in the absence of Dr. Dallas Wait, Chair of ELAB. Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, explained that Dr. Leibovitz would transition to official Chair during the meeting, although Dr. Wait was not present to transfer the chairship in person. She thanked Dr. Mike Delaney and Mr. Michael Flournoy for running for Vice-Chair, noting that either would have been a great Vice-Chair. The Board elected Dr. Delaney as the new Vice-Chair. Dr. Leibovitz thanked Dr. Wait in absentia for his outstanding job as Chair during the previous year. Ms. Phelps agreed.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION

Dr. Leibovitz welcomed participants and guests to the teleconference. Ms. Kristen LeBaron called the roll of the Board members and guests.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Dr. Leibovitz asked for any comments about the January and February minutes; there were none. Dr. Mahesh Pujari moved to accept the February minutes; Ms. Patty Carvajal seconded the motion. The Board members voted to approve the February minutes with two abstentions. Ms. Deb Waller moved to accept the January minutes; Dr. Kitty Kong seconded the motion. The Board members voted to approve the January minutes with one abstention.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Ms. Phelps currently is not able to publish any documents on the ELAB website. She is, however, able to circulate documents among the members, who are free to share any Board-approved documents with a larger audience. The Inspector General's report has been finalized; Ms. Phelps will distribute the report among the Board members.

TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

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

Dr. Leibovitz reported that Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy) had expressed interest in ensuring that laboratories are included earlier in the DQO process. Ms. Phelps has discussed this topic

with Dr. Adelson, who is actively trying to schedule a meeting of stakeholders to move the effort forward.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Leibovitz explained that Dr. Wait had forwarded to the Board members for their consideration a draft response letter addressed to EPA regarding methods harmonization. Mr. Elan Rieser thought that the response letter accurately addresses the Board's previous discussion about clarifying ELAB's intent regarding methods harmonization. Ms. Waller suggested using the term "comprehensive" rather than "complete" in the second paragraph. Dr. Leibovitz suggested deleting that entire sentence as well as the following sentence, as they are somewhat redundant following the rest of the paragraph. The Board members agreed to delete these two sentences: "Comments from some reviewers suggest ELAB was intent on complete method harmonization. That was not ELAB's intent."

Dr. Delaney moved to accept the letter with the discussed deletions. Mr. Brad Meadows seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the letter with this change. Ms. LeBaron will make the discussed changes to the letter, provide a copyedit, and send the letter to Dr. Leibovitz for his signature.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy reported that the Task Group has not met since the previous ELAB meeting, but he plans to set up another teleconference. Dr. Leibovitz asked whether the Task Group is discussing in-line and on-line monitoring for Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act purposes. Mr. Flournoy responded that the group has been striving toward this as a goal, but changes are being made to the Clean Water Act regulations. The following Board members have volunteered to work on this effort: Dr. Kong, Dr. Brian Buckley, Dr. Leibovitz and Ms. Waller.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

Dr. Delaney explained that he had distributed a letter and suggested minimum SIM criteria among the Board members for their consideration. The letter is similar to the original methods harmonization letter that was sent to EPA in 2016. Dr. Pujari commented that the letter accurately reflects the Board's many discussions on the topic. Mr. Meadows pointed out that the discrepancy between sections (e) and (g) with five versus eight spectra still exists; both instances should be five. Also, section (g) states that the SIM time windows must be set to a full baseline resolution. He noted that some pHs cannot be resolved to full baseline, so he recommended revising the "must" to read "should." Mr. Jeff Loewe noted two editorial changes on page 2 that Ms. LeBaron will address during her copyedit of the letter and attachment.

Dr. Buckley moved to approve the letter and attachment with the discussed changes and Ms. LeBaron's copyedit for EPA style, punctuation and grammar. Dr. Pujari seconded the motion. ELAB unanimously approved the motion.

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing

Dr. Leibovitz explained that Dr. Wait had circulated a letter regarding WET testing; however, it was circulated only among the Task Group members and not to the full Board. Dr. Leibovitz forwarded the letter to the ELAB members. Ms. Waller had reviewed the letter and submitted it to her supervisor, who had some comments about state implementation but did not have issues with the technical requirements. Dr. Leibovitz noted that it would be a better practice if standard conditions are used. Mr. Loewe agreed with the principles described in the letter. The Board decided to table the vote until the April meeting so that the members have time to review the letter more thoroughly. Dr. Kong suggested that the original white paper on which the letter is based be distributed to the new Board members, who may not have seen it. Mr. Meadows agreed that he would like to review the white paper. Dr. Leibovitz will send the white paper to the new ELAB members.

Cyanide Methodology

Dr. Delaney reported that the Task Group recently met for the third time via teleconference and is reviewing a series of white papers on the topic. EPA's third 6-year review of drinking water standards has been published in the *Federal Register* with a request for comments. Dr. Delaney provided comments, on behalf of himself and his company (i.e., not on the Board's behalf), before the deadline and included a technical report comprising white papers on the topic. The goal is to bring the Task Group's findings to ELAB during its April or May meeting so that the Board can vote on the Task Group's seven suggested recommendations.

Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course

No report was provided in Ms. Sharon Mertens' absence.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

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

Dr. Leibovitz explained that laboratories are concerned that they are restricted to specific libraries, but SW-846 is a guidance document. Another concern related to laboratories creating their own libraries. Dr. Pujari added that EPA wastewater method libraries are based on quadrupole technology. He wondered whether ELAB should suggest to EPA that laboratories be allowed to develop libraries based on new technologies. Dr. Leibovitz noted that the question is whether newer technologies will be approved for these methods.

Ms. Waller's notes from the Board's January face-to-face meeting indicated that ELAB was going to table this topic because of the challenges EPA faces in updating its methods. Ms. Carvajal stated that it may be a matter of identifying the issues, making EPA aware of the issues, and asking the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) whether it would like the Board's guidance.

In response to a request from Dr. Leibovitz, Ms. LeBaron will review the minutes from the prior two face-to-face meetings and identify the participants who introduced the issue. Dr. Leibovitz then will contact them for clarification.

Additional Topics/Issues for Consideration

Dr. Buckley moved to accept the letter clarifying the punctuation error in Section 11.3 of Method 6010D. Dr. Delaney seconded the motion. The Board approved the letter with one abstention. Ms. LeBaron will format the letter and provide it to Dr. Leibovitz.

Dr. Keri Hornbuckle requested that the Board discuss the current situation at EPA and determine how ELAB can support the Agency. In response to a question from Dr. Buckley, Ms. Phelps explained that ELAB's activities continue to proceed as normal. If the Board needs to publish something in the *Federal Register*, the process will be more difficult, but Ms. Phelps does not foresee this as an issue. The Board's meetings for the year already have been published in the *Federal Register*, so ELAB can continue meeting without interruption. The new EPA Administrator is meeting with Agency program heads on a very aggressive schedule.

Dr. Hornbuckle was interested in hearing how EPA's current actions are affecting the Board members' work and how commercial laboratories are carrying out their responsibilities. Dr. Leibovitz responded that nothing has changed at his job, but stress levels have increased, and it will be difficult to predict what may happen in the future. His colleagues desire to support the laboratory's federal partners, and laboratory leadership has received this message and continues to communicate with these partners.

Dr. Hornbuckle commented on a news report stating that science has been removed from EPA's mission and wondered whether this was accurate. She also had heard that regional and program offices are being reorganized. Ms. Phelps noted that the mission of EPA, which is to protect human health and the environment, has not changed, and this mission statement remains unchanged on the Agency's website. Science has never been included specifically within the mission statement. Dr. Hornbuckle asked whether the Agency's research mission has changed. A Board member who has EPA research grants has been told that the funding likely will continue, although this is not guaranteed. The question is whether new projects will be funded.

Dr. Hornbuckle asked what specific actions ELAB could take to help EPA accomplish its central mission, noting that she thought that the Board is in the position to provide a letter of support. A Board member wondered whether such a letter would be within ELAB's charter. The members could sign individual letters of support. Ms. Waller reminded the Board that those members who represent states are not considered private citizens. Dr. Hornbuckle commented that the communities that the members represent rely on EPA being functional. Ms. Phelps agreed that ELAB must stay within its charter and explained that the audiences for the Board's letters are the EPA Administrator, EPA Science Advisor and FEM. She reminded the members that their appointment to ELAB means that they cannot lobby Congress on behalf of the Board.

In response to a question from Dr. Leibovitz, Ms. Phelps explained that the Board sends letters to Mr. Michael Shapiro (Office of Water) on issues that involve the Office of Water. Some of ELAB's letters to the FEM are addressed to Mr. Shapiro as the current FEM Chair, and some are addressed to Ms. Phelps.

Dr. Leibovitz noted that the environmental and financial effects of the current federal situation are of concern to ELAB. The members should continue to determine how best to support EPA

and the environmental laboratory community. Ms. Waller commented that state laboratories may be affected in that they often have jurisdiction for testing not mandated at the federal level (e.g., air, solid waste, hazardous waste).

Ms. Carvajal noted the following statement on ELAB's website:

ELAB facilitates the operation and expansion of a national environmental accreditation program. In this regard, ELAB will provide advice and recommendations to EPA on issues that impact the non-governmental community that are related to (1) the operation and expansion of a national environmental accreditation program characterized by an acceptance of the program by all states and suitable for accrediting environmental laboratories or entities of all sizes and types and (2) steps that need to be taken in order to facilitate the further implementation of the performance paradigm in the nation's environmental monitoring and accreditation programs.

Dr. Leibovitz commented that ELAB supports the above mission by emphasizing standards for the environmental tests and accreditation on which the regulatory and industrial communities rely.

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

Ms. Waller moved to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Hornbuckle seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
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| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Update About Chair Transition | Phelps |
| Call to Order/Roll Call/Introduction of Guests | Leibovitz/LeBaron |
| Approval of Prior Minutes | Leibovitz |
| Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO | Phelps |
| Updates on Current Topics | |
| Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective Process: Leibovitz | |
| Methods Harmonization: Leibovitz | |
| In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy | |
| Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney | |
| Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing: Leibovitz | |
| Cyanide Methodology: Delaney | |
| Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course: Mertens | |
| New Topics/Issues for Consideration | Leibovitz |
| Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) Spectral Libraries | |
| Preparation of Reference Spectra Within the GC/MS Library | |
| Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items | Leibovitz/LeBaron |
| Closing Remarks/Adjournment | Phelps/Leibovitz |

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS LIST
Board Members

| Attendance (Y/N) | Name | Affiliation |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| N | Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Outgoing Chair) | Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry |
| Y | Dr. Henry Leibovitz (Outgoing Vice-Chair/Incoming Chair) | Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories |
| Y | Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney (Incoming Vice-Chair) | Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Representing: MWRA |
| Y | Ms. Lara Phelps (DFO) | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA |
| N | Dr. Kim Anderson | Oregon State University Representing: Academia—Oregon State University |
| N | Ms. Ann Bailey | EcoChem, Inc. Representing: EcoChem, Inc. |
| Y | 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 | Mr. Michael Flournoy | Eurofins Environment Testing USA Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories |
| Y | Dr. Keri Hornbuckle | The University of Iowa Representing: Academia—The University of Iowa |
| Y | Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong | Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron |
| Y | Mr. Jeff Loewe | NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc. |
| Y | Mr. Brad Meadows | BSK Associates Representing: Commercial Laboratory—BSK Associates |
| N | 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 |
| Y | Ms. Debra (Deb) 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) |

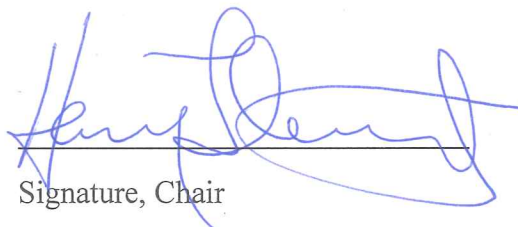
Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the January and February meeting minutes and send them via email to Ms. Phelps.
2. Ms. Phelps will distribute the Inspector General report among the Board members.
3. Ms. LeBaron will make the discussed changes to and copy edit the methods harmonization response letter and send it to Dr. Leibovitz for his signature.
4. Ms. LeBaron will make the discussed changes to and edit the SIM letter and attachment and send them via email to Dr. Leibovitz for his signature.
5. The Board will review the letter regarding WET testing and vote on it during its April meeting. Dr. Leibovitz will send the original white paper to the Board so that the new members can review it with the letter.
6. Ms. LeBaron will format clarifying the punctuation error in Section 11.3 of Method 6010D and provide it to Dr. Leibovitz
7. Ms. LeBaron will review the minutes from the prior two face-to-face meetings and identify the participants who introduced the issue of GC/MS spectral libraries; Dr. Leibovitz will contact them for clarification.
8. *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 March 15, 2017.

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

Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Chair