

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
May 17, 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 May 17, 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. Henry Leibovitz, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Marie Russell, filling in for 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 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Dr. Leibovitz asked for any comments about the April minutes; Ms. LeBaron will update the company information for Mr. Brad Meadows. Dr. Mahesh Pujari moved to accept the April 2017 minutes with the updated contact information; Ms. Patricia Carvajal seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to approve the April 2017 minutes.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

After Ms. Phelps was able to join the meeting, she explained that ELAB's charter is in the process of being renewed. The process has gone smoothly, with no indication that it will not continue to be so. Only minor changes have been made to the charter, with some language being replaced as a result of Federal Advisory Committee Act language revisions. The Board's scope and purpose have not changed. Dr. Keri Hornbuckle requested a list of the changes, which Ms. Phelps agreed to provide.

Ms. Phelps again is able to publish documents to the ELAB website. All signed and certified minutes have been published, and she is working on publishing recent Board letters and recommendations.

TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

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

This task is on hold until Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy) can convene a meeting of representatives from the Environmental Data Quality Workgroup and IDQTF.

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Leibovitz explained that the response letter regarding methods harmonization had been sent to EPA.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

The Task Group is in the process of planning a teleconference with EPA staff. Dr. Leibovitz's understanding is that Mr. Lemuel Walker (EPA) will be providing additional feedback regarding which methods provide opportunities to apply on-line monitoring.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

Dr. Leibovitz reported that the letter and recommendations regarding SIM had been sent to EPA.

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Testing

Dr. Leibovitz reported that the letter regarding WET testing had been sent to EPA.

Cyanide Methodology

Dr. Mike Delaney explained that he had revised the letter based on input that he had received. The Task Group convened a meeting to discuss the revised letter. After incorporating the input received during that meeting, Dr. Delaney sent the revised letter to the ELAB members.

Dr. Hornbuckle agreed with the revisions that had been included, but she is unclear why laboratories do not report blanks and detection limits rather than reporting below the limit. Dr. Delaney responded that the issue arises with the annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), which focuses on detected contaminants. This causes a public perception issue. Ms. Deb Waller added that the prescribed preservation requirements may cause false positives, so including method blanks and other quality control (QC) measures does not apply. Dr. Leibovitz commented that the language is ambiguous, which makes the CCR difficult to read for the lay person. Adding the QC data could potentially further confuse the public.

Dr. Brian Buckley asked how protective the 100 microgram/liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) limit would be against false positives. Ms. Waller noted that the current limit is 200 $\mu\text{g/L}$. An ELAB member clarified that the preservation requirements are in 40 CFR 141 and may not be in the analytical method. The treatment step does not cause cyanide to be present.

In response to a question from Dr. Leibovitz, a Board member explained that all contaminants with a maximum contaminant level and/or maximum contaminant level goal must be reported in the CCR. The Board discussed the contaminants that provoke strong reactions from the public, including cyanide and lead. Dr. Leibovitz asked whether the CCR could include a qualifier regarding cyanide results, explaining that cyanide may be present as a result of the preservation step. Board members pointed out that this would require education so that the public understands the qualification. Dr. Leibovitz had concerns about using a different approach (i.e., exemption) for cyanide. The ultimate goal is to remove public fear regarding the presence of cyanide reported in the CCR and for EPA to acknowledge this need. A Board member wanted EPA to revise 40 CFR 141 so that the preservation requirement for cyanide, which creates the possibility of false positives, is removed.

In response to a question, Dr. Delaney explained that, from a scientific perspective, it is possible to run cyanide analysis without the preservation step. A Board member clarified that it is not

possible from a regulatory standpoint to run the analysis without the preservation step because it is prescribed in 40 CFR 141.

A Board member asked about the law regarding ignoring levels between the reporting limit and the method detection limit for drinking water. ELAB members did not think that their states would allow this.

Dr. Leibovitz suggested adding a footnote in the CCR that explains that cyanide levels lower than 100 µg/L generally have been shown to be a result of the preservation process and refers people to the requirements in 40 CFR 141.

Ms. Sharon Mertens wondered how states prescribe CCR reporting. Ms. Waller responded that the *Federal Register* contains the language. Dr. Leibovitz thought that primacy states could add a comment to their CCRs. He would like ELAB to provide multiple options to address this issue. A Board member noted that the best approach to addressing the issue is recommending that EPA revise 40 CFR 141. ELAB members pointed out that this would take a long time, and the interim CCRs still could create public fears. A Board member suggested a two-prong approach, requesting the *Federal Register* revision and also recommending that the limit be lowered to 100 µg/L with a narrative to maintain transparency. Mr. Meadows noted that the state of California's drinking water regulations already have set a reporting limit of 100 µg/L.

Ms. Carvajal cited the precedence of a nonquorum contingent of ELAB meeting with EPA staff members at the face-to-face meeting to discuss issues that benefit from in-person discussion. This topic might benefit from such a discussion at the August face-to-face meeting. Dr. Delaney indicated that his goal was for ELAB to approve the letter before the face-to-face meeting, but he is amenable to revising the timeline.

Dr. Leibovitz suggested adding another paragraph to the letter that describes the second option. A Board member did not think that public perception should be part of the justification nor should the Board suggest that it recommends censoring data for the public. Instead, ELAB should recommend that 40 CFR 141 be changed so that the preservation technique does not affect the results. Dr. Leibovitz suggested that the language be revised to state that the justification is that the public is better informed and understands that cyanide may be present as a result of the preservation technique and not because it is present in the source water. He also recommended avoiding the phrase "false positive."

Dr. Delaney will revise the letter based on the new input. He added that he will be presenting about this issue during a drinking water session on the first morning of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference in August.

Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course

The Task Group is in the process of scheduling another meeting.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

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

Dr. Leibovitz explained that Ms. LeBaron had provided the Board members pertinent comments from the August 2016 and January 2017 ELAB face-to-face meetings regarding the GC/MS spectral libraries issue. Dr. Pujari will explore the issue and provide a report out during the June meeting.

Additional Topics/Issues for Consideration

Dr. Delaney wondered whether academics would be replaced by industry representatives on EPA's advisory boards as a result of the new administration. Ms. Waller explained that states had been reminded to remain flexible in terms of performance-based methods, but she had not heard about any other changes. Ms. Phelps had joined the call in time to hear this question and indicated that the Board's charter process is running smoothly; her comments have been included in the "Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO" section above.

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. Delaney 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#
May 17, 2017; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EDT

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: Leibovitz	
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	
Continue discussion on request to ELAB to address existing inconsistencies across EPA methods (624, 625, 8270) regarding the requirements for GC/MS spectral library sources.	
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Leibovitz/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Leibovitz

Attachment B**PARTICIPANTS LIST**
Board Members

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz (Chair)	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney (Vice-Chair)	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Representing: MWRA
Y	Ms. Lara Phelps (DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	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
N	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
N	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
N	Mr. Jeff Loewe	NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc.
Y	Mr. Brad Meadows	Babcock Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Commercial Laboratory—Babcock Laboratories, Inc.
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
N	Mr. Elan Rieser	Con Edison Representing: Utility Water Act Group
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
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)
Y	Ms. Marie Russell (ASPPH Fellow)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the April meeting minutes and send them via email to Ms. Phelps.
2. Ms. Phelps will provide the minor edits made to the Board's charter.
3. Dr. Delaney will revise the cyanide letter based on the additional input received at this meeting.
4. Dr. Pujari will explore the GC/MS spectral libraries issue and provide a report out during the June meeting.
5. *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 May 17, 2017.



Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Chair