

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
July 19, 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 July 19, 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. 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 June minutes; there were none. Dr. Mahesh Pujari moved to accept the June 2017 minutes; Ms. Sharon Mertens seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to approve the motion with two abstentions.

**OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO**

Ms. Phelps confirmed that the Board's charter was officially filed with the U.S. Congress on July 10, 2017. A *Federal Register* notice was published on July 19, 2017, announcing the charter, which is available on ELAB's website. Ms. Phelps is working to ensure that all of the Board's products and any responses are published to the website. In response to a question from Dr. Dallas Wait, Ms. Phelps explained that the charter is renewed every other year.

**TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS**

The Task Group leaders or their representatives provided updates about current Board topics.

***Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course***

Ms. Mertens reported that she had received an update from Ms. Aaren Alger (Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection) and Ms. Cathy Westerman (Virginia Department of Environmental Quality). After speaking to staff at EPA and understanding the limited resources available, the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Accreditation Council (AC) has decided not to pursue this issue. Dr. Leibovitz was surprised at this reversal. As he understands it, training is offered only once a year, which is very limiting. It would be helpful to design a framework, which could include regional training and other initiatives, so that an effort to improve access to training could more easily move forward if the resource situation changes. Ms. Mertens noted that the NELAP AC's letter about this issue, which the Board received in December 2016, had presented a potential framework.

Ms. Deb Waller was concerned that not all states accept reciprocate alternate certification. Dr. Leibovitz added that any alternate training must be acceptable to the Office of Water (OW) and would be reciprocated in states and regions. Ms. Mertens did not think that alternate training ideas had been suggested. She wondered whether the Board members thought that this is an issue on which ELAB could advise EPA.

Ms. Patty Carvajal noted that budgetary constraints and the current political climate may have had an effect on the NELAP AC's reversal. She thought that it would be helpful for ELAB to notify the Agency that it had been contacted and supports the ideas that were suggested in the December 2016 letter. Dr. Leibovitz agreed. Ms. Phelps commented that although the NELAP AC had brought the issue to the attention of ELAB, that body continued to pursue the issue without the Board's support. It will be appropriate for ELAB to pursue the matter if the members also find the lack of training options to be a concern. Advice from the Board could emphasize to the Agency that alternate approaches (e.g., regional training, webinars) are necessary because the current training structure presents a challenge to the community.

Dr. Leibovitz thought that it would be helpful to discuss this topic with participants at the Board's upcoming face-to-face meeting. Ms. Mertens agreed, noting that EPA staff will be present to hear the community's comments.

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

Mr. Michael Flournoy still is awaiting a response from EPA. He plans to follow up with Mr. Lem Walker (OW). Ms. Phelps commented that she had followed up with appropriate staff regarding this issue, and Mr. Walker had indicated that he would deliver the reframed charge for the Board.

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

The Board has received a response from OW regarding its advice letter on this issue. Ms. Phelps is trying to facilitate a meeting with Mr. Adrian Hanley (OW) and his colleagues. He has been on vacation and has not had a chance to thoroughly absorb the letter, but Ms. Phelps will follow up with him. This is a multi-office issue; the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) is the lead for this program. EPA's response will need to be coordinated. Holding a face-to-face meeting at the National Environmental Monitoring Conference should be beneficial. Ultimately, OECA may need to make any changes, but it is important that OW and OECA coordinate their efforts.

Ms. Mertens asked whether The NELAC Institute (TNI) had received EPA's response, as TNI is referenced in it. Ms. Phelps explained that Ms. Lynn Bradley (TNI) had asked about this issue, and she had provided Ms. Bradley with ELAB's letter. Ms. Phelps had not wanted to provide the Agency's response to TNI before the Board had had a chance to discuss it. Ms. Mertens is free to share the response now that ELAB has discussed it. Ms. Mertens will forward EPA's response on the WET testing issue to Ms. Bradley and Mr. Jerry Parr (TNI).

### ***Open Topics With No Current Updates***

Dr. Leibovitz asked the Board members to consider how to present the information about the 2017 advice letters to the participants at the face-to-face meeting (e.g., bullet points vs. presenting the full letter).

To guide the Board's decision, Ms. Phelps provided updates on all four efforts that had resulted in recent advice letters.

- The Agency's response to the Board's cyanide methodology letter has been drafted, and ELAB should receive it prior to its face-to-face meeting. Mr. Dan Hautman (OW), who has been instrumental in drafting the response, will be present at the Board's face-to-face meeting.
- Ms. Phelps has been invited to a meeting of the Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IADQTF) taking place the following day and will provide updates as appropriate. The IADQTF plans to provide a statement to ELAB, potentially at the face-to-face meeting by Dr. Jordan Adelson (U.S. Navy/IADQTF).
- The Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) held its quarterly meeting the day prior to the Board's teleconference, and ELAB's methods harmonization response letter was on the agenda. The FEM appreciated the clarification provided by the Board and will be vigilant about seeking opportunities to harmonize methods. No additional response will be forthcoming at this point.
- Ms. Phelps believes that EPA's response to selected ion monitoring has been misplaced; she has asked Dr. Michael Shapiro (OW) to follow up on this.

The Task Group leads discussed their assignments for developing the slide deck for the face-to-face meeting. Dr. Mike Delaney plans to develop bullets about the cyanide methodology deliberations and may be able to develop bullets about EPA's response if this response is received in time. Dr. Wait will develop a slide about methods harmonization. Dr. Leibovitz will develop a slide about the WET testing effort. If he has an update about the IADTQF effort prior to the meeting, he will develop a slide; otherwise, he will defer to any remarks that Dr. Adelson may make at the meeting. When she edits and formats the slide deck, Ms. LeBaron will develop a bullet about the Method 2010D letter on the slide detailing the advice ELAB has provided since the previous face-to-face meeting.

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

#### ***August 2017 Face-to-Face Meeting***

The next face-to-face meeting will be held on Monday, August 7, 2017, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST (with a 30-minute break) in Washington, D.C. Each Task Group lead should provide at least one slide detailing the group's current status to Ms. LeBaron by August 1 so that she can format and edit the slides prior to the meeting. If necessary, the previous two face-to-face meeting slide decks can be provided to the members. Dr. Pujari, Dr. Kim Anderson, and Mr. Elan Rieser plan to attend the meeting via teleconference.

### ***Flexible Approaches to Environmental Measurements Webinar***

Dr. Leibovitz asked whether the Board needed to take additional action to endorse EPA's flexible approaches. Ms. Phelps explained that, because ELAB had been instrumental in the Agency adopting flexible approaches, she wanted the members to hear the webinar. One goal of the webinar series is to institutionalize knowledge about the Agency's flexible approaches efforts. If the Board members feel passionate about any aspects of this topic, ELAB could develop a response. Otherwise, no response is needed.

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

Dr. Leibovitz asked for comments on the GC/MS spectral libraries issue. Dr. Brian Buckley would like to obtain feedback at the face-to-face meeting because the Board does not currently have a focused question. Participants can provide input about what they need in a user-defined library.

Dr. Pujari summarized that although the technology has moved forward, EPA has imposed a restriction that creates confusion on how to use Agency methods with enhanced instruments. The master library has been built using old technologies. Dr. Buckley agreed, noting that the charge question can be shaped multiple ways (e.g., What criteria will be required for a user-generated library? Can existing libraries be adapted with different acceptance criteria?). The Board must ensure that the question it explores ultimately is useful for and meets the needs of the community. Dr. Leibovitz agreed that several angles of approaching the topic exist. Dr. Buckley reiterated that participants should provide input about which of the possible solutions that the Board should pursue. He will develop slides to stimulate the discussion on this topic at the face-to-face meeting.

### ***Additional Topics/Issues for Consideration***

Dr. Pujari asked about the status of the Method Update Rule. Ms. Phelps explained that the signature package had to be redone, and it is again working its way through the system.

### **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. Mertens moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Rieser seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

**Attachment A**

**AGENDA**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#**  
**July 19, 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

Drinking Water Certification Officer’s Course: Mertens  
 In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy  
 Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing: Leibovitz

*Open topics with no current updates:*

*Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective Process: Leibovitz*  
*Methods Harmonization: Wait*  
*Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney*  
*Cyanide Methodology: Delaney*

New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Leibovitz
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August 2017 Face-to-Face Meeting

Flexible Approaches to Environmental Measurements Webinar Discussion

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
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Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Leibovitz
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**Attachment B****PARTICIPANTS LIST**  
Board Members

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
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
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
N	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	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
Y	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

<b>Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)

## **Attachment C**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the June meeting minutes and send them via email to Ms. Phelps.
2. Ms. Mertens will develop bullets to stimulate discussion at the face-to-face meeting regarding the Drinking Water Certification Officer's Course and circulate them among the Task Group members.
3. Mr. Flournoy will follow up with Mr. Walker about the reframed charge regarding in-line and on-line monitoring.
4. Ms. Phelps will continue to coordinate a meeting with Mr. Hanley and other appropriate personnel to discuss the WET testing issue.
5. Ms. Mertens will forward EPA's response on the WET testing issue to Ms. Bradley and Mr. Parr.
6. Dr. Buckley will develop the GC/MS spectral libraries discussion points for the face-to-face meeting slide deck.
7. Task Group leads will develop their slides for the face-to-face meeting and provide them to Ms. LeBaron no later than August 1.
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 July 19, 2017.



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Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Chair