

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
October 18, 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 October 18, 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 PRIOR MINUTES**

Dr. Leibovitz asked for any comments about the September meeting minutes. Dr. Mahesh Pujari requested that an action item be added that indicates that he would follow up about the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) congeners method update separate from his acrolein and acrylonitrile preservation action item. Dr. Pujari moved to accept the September 2017 minutes with his addition; Dr. Mike Delaney seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes with the additional action item.

### **OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO**

Ms. Phelps explained that she is continuing her efforts to improve the ELAB website. EPA has guidelines regarding the length of time that items may remain on the front page; Ms. Phelps is investigating the specific amount of time. The Board's earlier products will be available on an archival webpage. Ms. Phelps' goal is for all of the Board's products from its 20-year history to be published to the website.

The Human Studies Review Board, an EPA Federal Advisory Committee Act committee, has openings for members. If the Board members have recommendations for colleagues who would like to serve on the committee, Ms. Phelps can discuss this further with them. The committee already has an overwhelming number of academic members, so those in academia will not be considered for membership.

### **TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS**

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

#### ***Drinking Water Certification Officer Training Course***

Ms. Sharon Mertens reported that the Task Group had met and developed a draft advice letter for the Board to consider. The letter details several recommendations for improving the accessibility

of the course while recognizing that certain components must remain hands-on. Although EPA's drinking water program is responsible for the course, additional internal and external assistance could be incorporated, as described in the letter.

Dr. Delaney, in the absence of Ms. Deb Waller, noted that her state (New Jersey) would not consider the training authoritative unless EPA delivers it. He asked the other ELAB members if they knew of any states that would be amenable to training provided by entities other than EPA. Dr. Leibovitz responded that his state (Rhode Island) relies on the region to assess laboratories, and his laboratory relies on EPA to provide the training. If EPA sanctions the training, he expects that his state would accept it. He added that he liked the broad suggestions in the letter, which provide the Agency with many options for implementing them. Ms. Mertens explained that this was the goal.

Dr. Brian Buckley moved that the letter be sent to EPA after a 1-week comment period, during which the Board members could provide additional feedback. Ms. Mertens seconded the motion, which the ELAB members unanimously approved. The motion will be included in the highlights and action items that Ms. LeBaron provides to Ms. Phelps within 24 hours of the teleconference; Ms. Phelps will ensure that she emphasizes the motion in the e-mail body when she sends the highlights and action items to the members so that those members not present on the call are aware of it.

### ***Cyanide Methodology***

Dr. Delaney explained that EPA had responded to ELAB's cyanide methodology letter in July. After the Board's September meeting, he contacted Task Group members and discussed a possible informal meeting with Mr. Dan Hautman (EPA). At ELAB's face-to-face meeting in August, Mr. Hautman had indicated that his 5-page response letter had been significantly abridged before it was sent to the Board, and Dr. Delaney would like him to detail the additional points with the Task Group. Ms. Phelps will facilitate the meeting between the Task Group and Mr. Hautman; the group discussed their schedules to assist Ms. Phelps in scheduling the meeting.

If the Task Group chooses to develop an agenda for the meeting, Ms. Phelps can provide it to Mr. Hautman. Dr. Delaney commented that besides discussing the additional points missing from EPA's final response letter, he also would like to clarify with Mr. Hautman the difference between guidelines and regulations in actual practice. Ms. Phelps explained that as far as the Agency is considered, guidance is considered a suggestion or recommendation. Some entities choose to adopt guidance as "the law."

The Task Group currently includes five members; one additional member might join before a quorum is reached.

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

Mr. Michael Flournoy has not received the final reframed charge from EPA, so no additional actions have been taken since the last update. Ms. Phelps has spoken to Agency personnel about this issue; they believe that the Board is missing essential expertise for the information-gathering process and have beneficial contacts that they plan to suggest to assist the Task Group.

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

Dr. Leibovitz reported that ELAB had received a response letter from EPA, and the Agency plans to explore the topic. Ms. Phelps explained that the Forum on Environmental Measurement (FEM) will meet the following week, and this item is on the agenda. She expects that the FEM will choose to form a workgroup to investigate this issue.

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

Dr. Leibovitz explained that the Board members had received the minutes from the meeting that some ELAB members held with personnel from EPA and The NELAC Institute about WET testing during the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC). Since this meeting, the group has been questioning why proficiency testing (PT) samples are not available for all WET PT tests and why PT providers do not offer them. Questions also have arisen about how to determine a hypothetical no-observed-effect concentration. Ms. Laura Phillips (EPA) is seeking the historical explanation for this and plans to provide an update when she has found the information.

Dr. Leibovitz thought that the Board had completed its goals regarding this issue, and the task will be moved to inactive status. Ms. Mertens asked whether any additional response was expected. Dr. Leibovitz explained that EPA's response was a request to meet with the Task Group, which was accomplished at NEMC. He did not expect a further response; Ms. Phelps agreed.

### ***Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH***

Dr. Pujari explained that the Board had previously advised EPA regarding the analysis requirements and pH preservation for acrolein and acrylonitrile, but EPA did not incorporate the recommended changes in the final versions of the SW-846 and 40 CFR 136 updates. His action item from the September meeting was to explore this issue, but he has not had time.

Dr. Pujari reported that EPA's goal had been to develop a simple, bench-top gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy (GC/MS) method for PCB congeners. A small group has been developing such a method. He hopes to have permission before the November ELAB meeting to allow the Board to review this method.

### ***GC/MS Spectral Libraries***

Dr. Leibovitz explained that the Board had been discussing whether to create a Task Group on the topic, and Dr. Buckley had agreed to lead the Task Group during the previous meeting. Dr. Buckley explained that the various discussions about this topic had indicated that some individuals wanted to establish personal libraries, whereas others did not. He would like the Board to explore whether it can suggest criteria that would allow laboratories to utilize either a personal library or the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) library.

Dr. Pujari thought the issue that had been discussed at the August 2016 ELAB face-to-face meeting was that NIST uses quadrupole technologies, and the question is whether other technologies could be used. Dr. Buckley agreed, explaining that this was how he had framed his

presentation during the August 2017 face-to-face meeting. At that meeting, however, the participants expanded the issue to include how a user-based library could be validated. The prevailing opinion of NIST-library users appeared to be that user-generated libraries could not be validated adequately to be compared to the NIST library. Because this topic encompasses multiple issues, it is important to first define the specific question that the Task Group will explore.

Dr. Buckley stated that the first step of a Task Group devoted to this topic would need to be to define the question(s). The next step would be to prioritize the questions and focus on one at a time.

In response to a comment by Dr. Pujari, Dr. Buckley reiterated that the issue discussed by the participants at the recent face-to-face meeting goes beyond technology transfer. He would like to develop reasonable recommendations (e.g., a set of criteria for evaluating a user-generated library); the question is whether the existing method framework can allow the use of user-generated libraries. During the previous discussions, everyone had agreed on the need for a skilled GC/MS operator. Skilled liquid chromatography/MS operators will be needed eventually for nonvolatile compounds.

Dr. Buckley asked whether the Board would like to establish a Task Group. Dr. Leibovitz thought that an initial Task Group should be established, and if multiple issues exist, additional Task Groups could be established to explore each issue. He agreed that guidelines for user-generated libraries need to be developed. The Board decided to form a Task Group on the topic, led by Dr. Buckley. Drs. Leibovitz and Pujari volunteered to serve on the group. Because Mr. Brad Meadows also might be interested in joining, Dr. Buckley will contact him.

Dr. Buckley explained that he would pose the potential questions to the Task Group so that the members could frame a list of tasks to be undertaken. The Task Group will be officially created during the November meeting.

#### NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

During the Board's September meeting, Ms. Waller had introduced the topic of exploring methods for EPA to handle drinking water issues more quickly than waiting for the *Federal Register* process. She had indicated that she planned to draft a framework by the November meeting to help ELAB explore how to streamline the current process.

Dr. Buckley explained that the concern for the state of New Jersey is that polyfluorinated compounds will be regulated, which will make a good test case for streamlining the process. Dr. Leibovitz commented that the ability to use new technologies also would be beneficial. Dr. Buckley commented that ELAB might want to recommend that EPA continue exploring performance-based methods rather than instrument-based methodologies. Dr. Leibovitz agreed, and Ms. Phelps added that the Agency has a commitment to institutionalize flexible approaches to environmental measurements. Dr. Leibovitz noted that state regulators do not seem to understand flexibility even when the Agency encourages it, and this is a challenge.

Ms. Mertens thought that instead of approaching the topic broadly, the Board could focus on one or two examples of emerging contaminants that currently are not regulated (e.g., per- and

polyfluoroalkyl substances [PFAS]). Dr. Leibovitz agreed. Ms. Phelps commented that she is interested in seeing what actions that the Board might recommend for dealing with emerging contaminants while the rule-making process is in progress. She cited the recent example of PFAS, for which only one method was available at the time it came to the attention of the Agency as a problem. As a result, the method has been used in situations for which it was not intended, leading to a number of discussions within the Agency. This effort could result in a partnership between ELAB and the FEM.

Dr. Leibovitz explained that the Association of Public Health Laboratories' Environmental Laboratory Sciences Committee, on which he serves, has been approached by EPA to perform method validation studies. The Agency is coordinating this effort among several state and commercial laboratories.

Ms. Phelps thought that ELAB should become informed about PFAS issues and the current process but identify another emerging area on which to focus its efforts because of the political challenges surrounding PFAS. Dr. Buckley understood Ms. Phelps' point but noted that any emerging contaminant the Board chooses will have these challenges. Ms. Phelps agreed. Dr. Buckley suggested categorizing classic compounds according to their net health effects (e.g., endocrine disruptor suite, neurotoxin suite), which would allow emerging contaminants to be discussed in terms of their target organ systems. With this approach, no specific industry or compound will be singled out. Dr. Leibovitz thought that personal care products could be explored. Dr. Buckley cautioned that pharmaceutical manufacturers will be resistant to regulating contaminants to levels considerably lower than current levels.

Ms. Phelps commented that because each emerging contaminant will have its own set of political challenges, the Board could engage in a more global conversation instead of focusing on one particular contaminant area. The goal could be to establish a recommended benchmark or process that could be used before the rule-making process is complete, examining what logical steps could be taken in any media, especially in the absence of any approved methods. Once this global discussion has occurred, specific areas could be cited as examples of how the process would work.

Dr. Buckley made a motion to determine during the November meeting whether the Board should establish a Task Group on addressing emerging contaminants. Dr. Kim Anderson seconded the motion, which the Board approved unanimously.

#### **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. Leibovitz moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Mertens seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.



**Attachment A**

**AGENDA**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#**  
**October 18, 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 Training Course: Mertens	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing: Leibovitz	
Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH: Pujari	
GC/MS Spectral Libraries: Buckley	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Leibovitz
Explore methods for EPA to handle drinking water issues more quickly than waiting for the <i>Federal Register</i> process	
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Leibovitz/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Leibovitz

**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. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company Representing: Chevron
Y	Mr. Jeff Loewe	NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc.
N	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
N	Dr. A. Dallas Wait	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
N	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)
Y	Ms. Stacie Crandall (Guest)	Hampton Roads Sanitation District
Y	Mr. Joe Lapceovich (Guest)	First Energy

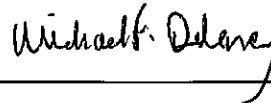
## Attachment C

### ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the September meeting minutes and send them via email to Ms. Phelps.
2. Board members will provide comments on the advice letter regarding improving accessibility of the Drinking Water Certification Officer Training Course no later than October 25; Ms. LeBaron will incorporate any comments and finalize the letter for Dr. Leibovitz to send to EPA after the 1-week comment period has finished.
3. Ms. Phelps will facilitate the meeting between the Cyanide Methodology Task Group and Mr. Hautman.
4. Dr. Buckley will lead the Task Group on GC/MS spectral libraries once the group is officially established during the November meeting. Drs. Leibovitz and Pujari will serve on this Task Group. Dr. Buckley will contact Mr. Meadows to determine whether he is willing to serve, as well.
5. November's agenda will include a discussion about emerging contaminants and whether ELAB should establish a Task Group on the topic.
6. *Carryover action item from September:* By the November Board meeting, Ms. Waller will draft a framework that will help ELAB explore how changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act can be adopted in a way similar to how changes to the Clean Water Act are adopted.

**Attachment D**

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on October 18, 2017.



Signature, Vice-Chair

Dr. Michael Delaney

Print Name, Vice-Chair