

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#  
December 20, 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 December 20, 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. Mr. Simon Weavers, filling in for Ms. Kristen LeBaron, called the roll of the Board members and guests.

**APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES**

Dr. Leibovitz asked for comments on the November meeting minutes; there were none. Dr. Brian Buckley moved to accept the November 2017 minutes; Dr. Mahesh Pujari seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

**OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO**

Ms. Phelps will be provided with further guidance about members serving on EPA Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees who also are associated with Agency grants or contracts. An extensive decision-making process is underway regarding the appropriateness of such individuals serving on EPA FACA committees.

**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 this topic is on hold until ELAB receives a response from EPA.

***Addressing Emerging Contaminants***

Ms. Mertens reported that this effort will begin following the holidays.

***Cyanide Methodology***

Dr. Mike Delaney explained that the Task Group had met and discussed the potential response to EPA. He reported that Dr. Leibovitz had forwarded the draft response letter to the ELAB members to be discussed during this teleconference. Essentially, the letter asks the Agency to

continue addressing this issue. Dr. Leibovitz thought that the response is appropriate and explained that it suggests that EPA develop a page of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for those who must use the method for drinking water compliance; these FAQs could include information that has been provided to the Board by Mr. Dan Hautman (EPA).

Dr. Leibovitz explained that Mr. Michael Shapiro (EPA) will be retiring within the next 2 weeks, and he asked to whom the response letter would be addressed if the Board did not send it immediately. Ms. Phelps explained that his replacement currently is not known. It is appropriate to address the letter to Mr. Shapiro because it will be sent to the Office of Water (OW) and not the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM). As such, it will automatically be forwarded to his replacement, who should be identified by the first week of January. The new OW Assistant Administrator was confirmed the previous Thursday, and Mr. Shapiro is stepping back into his role as the OW Deputy Assistant Administrator. If ELAB, however, waits until the new personnel are in place, the letter is less likely to be “lost in the shuffle.” Alternatively, ELAB could address the letter to Mr. Hautman.

Dr. Pujari asked what the response letter meant by “flexibility.” Ms. Deb Waller noted that those who routinely perform cyanide testing would inherently know what is meant, and she wondered whether it should be clarified for others. Dr. Delaney explained that the statement taken from the method is surprisingly broad. The context of Mr. Hautman’s letter to the state of Minnesota regarding flexibility was related to alternative dechlorination chemicals. The method language is quoted directly in the letter. Dr. Leibovitz explained to Dr. Pujari that EPA could define the flexibility in the suggested FAQs; it did not need to be explained in the Board’s letter.

Dr. Delaney moved to approve the letter with the agreement that ELAB would wait until Mr. Shapiro’s successor is named, address the letter appropriately at that time, and send it after January 1, 2018. Ms. Waller seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

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

Mr. Michael Flournoy has not heard from Mr. Lem Walker (EPA) about specific ways ELAB can help the Agency with this issue. He is excited about the opportunity to participate in meetings about sensors; broad discussions about sensors will help the environmental laboratory community address this issue in the future. inactive

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

Ms. Phelps explained that the FEM had drafted a response letter to ELAB regarding its advice on SIM, although Mr. Shapiro has not yet officially signed the letter and is expected to do so shortly. She read the draft letter to the Board members and promised to provide the draft if the members agreed not to circulate it outside of ELAB. The FEM obtained input from OW, the Office of Air and Radiation, the Office of Land and Emergency Management, the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, two of the Office of Research and Development’s national laboratories, and one regional office. One of the national laboratories published a recent paper on this topic, which will be included as an attachment with EPA’s response letter. The Agency would like ELAB to revise its advice based on the feedback contained in the letter and provide the revised advice to EPA. The Agency plans to institutionalize the revised recommendations

across EPA, which represents a significant achievement. This is very relevant for several offices, which are waiting for ELAB's response to inform their ongoing work in this area.

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

Dr. Buckley has sent to the Task Group information about this topic, including the criteria that various agencies use to validate a method. Rugged criteria—such as repeatability, reproducibility and signal-to-noise ratios—have been documented by multiple method-generating entities. Because the Task Group will be discussing potential criteria that can be used to determine whether a user-generated library can meet the appropriate level of rigor, it will be helpful to determine how other agencies have ensured that their methods meet this level. Dr. Buckley will send a Doodle poll to the Task Group members, asking about their availability to convene via teleconference to discuss these criteria, as well as other evaluation criteria that can be used to create a protocol or procedure with the same rigor as the protocols of the National Institute of Standards and Technology library.

Dr. Pujari noted that he plans to provide comments on the information that Dr. Buckley sent. Dr. Buckley explained that the criteria that he sent may help the Task Group to decide which direction it would like to take to address this issue. Dr. Pujari thought that the Task Group was on the right path scientifically.

### ***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 and provided supporting data and strong justification, but EPA did not incorporate the recommended changes into the revised Method Update Rule (MUR). He thought that ELAB should contact Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) to determine why the advice was not incorporated. He plans to meet with Mr. Hanley via teleconference to discuss the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) congener method; he plans to also ask him about the acrolein and acrylonitrile issue and determine EPA's previous comments and justification. Dr. Waller explained that the Agency's responses to public comments on the MUR, which include ELAB's, are publicly available online on the federal docket. Mr. Hanley took over this issue only recently, after Dr. Robin Oshiro's (EPA) passing in 2017.

Dr. Delaney explained that Mr. Walker has indicated that Method 624.1 contains a mistake in that acrolein and acrylonitrile appear in both Tables 1 and 2. Mr. Walker has confirmed that acrolein and acrylonitrile should be included in Table 2 only and not in Table 1.

### ***Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved Methods***

Ms. Waller explained that she had sent to the ELAB members a rough draft of the letter to EPA regarding this topic; she also included a June 2012 EPA letter regarding Standard Methods. She asked the Board members to consider the draft letter and provide input. A simple letter issued by EPA could allow states to "get on the same page" regarding drinking water methods, similar to how wastewater methods are handled.

In response to a question from Dr. Leibovitz, Ms. Waller explained that she alone is working on this issue currently. Dr. Leibovitz asked the Board members to provide Ms. Waller with their

input via email, copying him. ELAB can determine during the face-to-face meeting whether to establish a Task Group on this topic.

## NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dr. Leibovitz explained that he had forwarded to the Board members additional discussion about the whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing issue; members of The NELAC Institute (TNI) WET Expert Committee and EPA will discuss the topic further on the Tuesday of the upcoming Forum on Environmental Accreditation.

Ms. Mertens explained that she had been asked to participate in a meeting on behalf of TNI; the meeting was held in Washington, D.C., in November 2017 and also included members from EPA and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The meeting was held at the request of the E-Enterprise Leadership Council, which comprises senior environmental leaders from EPA and several states and tribes. The Council has charged EPA with performing a feasibility analysis on the creation of a voluntary evaluation or certification program to ensure the quality of new sensor technology. Approximately 40 participants attended the meeting, the purpose of which was to inform the Agency about how standards and conformity assessments could help to produce quality data from environmental sensor technologies. Eventually, EPA will be a minority provider of environmental data given the number of monitoring networks that use a wide variety of sensors. The question is about EPA's role in the new paradigm and establishment of appropriate conformance standards. One action item produced from open brainstorming at the meeting is that EPA and ANSI will begin by examining one technology per media (e.g., nitrate for water) and investigate the standard testing procedures, existing sensor technologies, criteria for evaluating future sensor technologies, and so forth. This will provide opportunities for ELAB and other similar groups to examine the new paradigm and determine how it can be used to everyone's advantage.

Ms. Waller explained that entities with strong wastewater and ambient monitoring programs have been dealing with sensor technology approvals for some time. She noted that nitrate has been a challenge, and she appreciates that this topic will be investigated. Ms. Waller asked whether the ultimate goal is a third-party verification program or a third-party review program. Ms. Mertens responded that neither is a specific goal at this point. Everything is on the table, and nothing has been decided yet.

Dr. Delaney explained that Mr. Hanley had informed him that the PCB congener group is at the point of looking for wastewater plants or laboratories for samples to perform a multilaboratory study of the new, simpler PCB congener method. Perhaps ELAB could receive a more detailed update at the face-to-face meeting.

Task Group leaders will develop their slides for the face-to-face meeting and submit them to Ms. LeBaron for editing no later than January 12, 2018.

Dr. Leibovitz asked whether the Board could publicly recognize and thank Mr. Shapiro during its face-to-face meeting despite the fact that he already will be retired. Ms. Phelps responded that this would be fine. Dr. Leibovitz asked who would be present at the face-to-face meeting.

Ms. Phelps indicated that she may not be able to attend in person, but she will at least be on the telephone; she will send an email to the Board members to determine attendance.

#### **WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

Mr. Weavers 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 voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

**Attachment A**

**AGENDA**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#**  
**December 20, 2017; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST**

Call to Order/Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Leibovitz/Weavers
Approval of Prior Minutes	Leibovitz
Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO	Phelps
Updates on Current Topics	
Drinking Water Certification Officer Training Course: Mertens	
Addressing Emerging Contaminants: Mertens	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
GC/MS Spectral Libraries: Buckley	
Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH: Pujari	
Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved Methods: Waller	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Leibovitz
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Leibovitz/Weavers
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Leibovitz/Phelps



**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
N	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
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
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	Mr. Simon Weavers (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)

## **Attachment C**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the November meeting minutes and send them via email to Ms. Phelps.
2. ELAB will send its cyanide response letter to Mr. Shapiro's replacement after January 1, 2018.
3. Dr. Buckley will use a Doodle poll to determine the best time for the Task Group members to meet to discuss GC/MS spectral libraries.
4. The Board members will provide input on the letter about the draft drinking water program adoption of recent approved methods to Ms. Waller and Dr. Leibovitz via email.
5. Task Group leaders will develop their slides for the face-to-face meeting and submit them to Ms. LeBaron for editing no later than January 12, 2018.
6. Ms. Phelps will poll the Board members via email to determine face-to-face meeting attendance.

**Attachment D**

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on December 20, 2017.



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Signature, Chair

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Dr. Henry Leibovitz

Print Name, Chair