

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 202-991-0477/7939251#
February 21, 2018; 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 February 21, 2018. 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 Dr. Thomas O'Farrell, Designated Federal Officer (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 comments on the January face-to-face meeting minutes; there were none. Dr. Mahesh Pujari moved to accept the January 2018 minutes; Dr. Dallas Wait and Mr. Brad Meadows simultaneously seconded the motion. The Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes with one abstention.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Dr. O'Farrell thanked Ms. Lara Phelps, the transitioning DFO, for her work with ELAB. The Agency has changed its conference call system, and the new call-in number (provided above) will be used for all future Board meetings. The goal is to recruit approximately six new members for the upcoming ELAB term; if Board members have suggestions for potential members, they should contact Dr. O'Farrell.

Dr. O'Farrell formally introduced himself, explaining that he also serves as the DFO for EPA's Human Subjects Research Board. He is in the Office of the Science Advisor, based at Headquarters in Washington, D.C. , and much of his focus is on the Agency's Science and Technology Policy Council. He previously worked in EPA's National Center for Environmental Research, managing the peer-review panels that review EPA's extramural grant applications. His undergraduate and doctoral degrees are in biochemistry.

Dr. Wait asked about the process for selecting a new Vice-Chair in March, when Dr. Mike Delaney is scheduled to transition from Vice-Chair to Chair. Ms. Phelps explained the process that she had used during her tenure as DFO, noting that she always sent an email to the Board members with a list eligible nominees; nominations and voting also occurred via email.

Dr. Delaney explained that he plans to retire during the summer, and he did not feel comfortable serving as Chair in retired status. Ms. Phelps explained that when a similar situation occurred in the past, the Board had decided that the then-current Chair would serve a second term, and a new Vice-Chair was selected.

Dr. Leibovitz asked about the ability to serve on ELAB as a retiree. Ms. Phelps explained that a retiree still possesses expertise valuable to the Board and may serve on ELAB, but it is necessary to be cognizant that the dynamic of the Board's representation would change. Dr. Delaney will determine whether he is comfortable serving as Chair, and if not, the Board will determine the next steps.

Dr. Leibovitz commented that the face-to-face meeting went well other than technical issues with the audio-visual equipment, and he thanked Ms. LeBaron for her support at the meeting.

TASK GROUP UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

The Task Group leaders or their representatives provided updates about current Board topics. Dr. Leibovitz noted the topics that are currently inactive/awaiting further information: whole effluent toxicity proficiency study standards, Drinking Water Certification Officer Training Course, in-line and on-line monitoring, and Interagency Data Quality Task Force/data quality objectives.

Cyanide Methodology

The Board approved a letter in response to EPA's reply to the original ELAB letter on cyanide methodologies and is awaiting information about Dr. Mike Shapiro's (EPA) replacement so that the letter can be sent. Ms. Phelps explained that Mr. David Ross (EPA) had been confirmed as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water (OW). Because he was not in the position when OW received the original letter, she recommended sending the response letter to him and ensuring that Mr. Dan Hautman (EPA) and the other members of the OW group who worked on the issue are copied. They will be able to provide him with background about the effort; ELAB's original letter also can be included as an attachment to provide Mr. Ross with additional background.

Dr. Delaney reported that an article entitled "Is There Cyanide in My Drinking Water?" will be published in an upcoming issue of the Association of Public Health Laboratory's *Lab Matters* newsletter. An article about avoiding false positives during wastewater cyanide testing will be published this spring in The NELAC Institute's quarterly newsletter, *The Institute Review*. He noted that the cyanide question-and-answer page in the Methods Update Rule (MUR) section of EPA's website has not been updated since 2003, and not all of the information on this page is current. Ms. Phelps said that it would be appropriate for the Task Group to communicate with Mr. Hautman directly about the website issue.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

Because he was not able to attend the January face-to-face meeting, Dr. Delaney asked for clarification about the comments on the topic of SIM that the Board had received at that meeting, as some comments varied about how comprehensive ELAB's response should be. Dr. Leibovitz thought that the Task Group should meet to discuss EPA's response and determine how comprehensive the Board's response to EPA will be. Dr. Delaney asked Board members with SIM expertise to join the Task Group, which previously included external experts from contract laboratories and the state of New York. Dr. Buckley volunteered to serve on the Task Group.

Dr. Leibovitz will re-forward EPA's response to the Board members, and Dr. Delaney will schedule a teleconference with those ELAB members who wish to participate.

User-Generated Library Acceptance Criteria

Dr. Buckley explained that he would like input on how to ask EPA about its willingness to suspend the tuning criteria. If the Agency is unwilling to suspend these criteria, this effort cannot move forward. Dr. Leibovitz suggested that Dr. Buckley and the Task Group draft a letter explaining the science and reasoning behind the request. Once the letter has been sent, the Task Group can engage in a dialogue with the Agency to discuss the issue further. Mr. O'Farrell will research the appropriate recipient for the letter.

Addressing Emerging Contaminants

In the absence of Ms. Sharon Mertens, no update was provided.

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 had not incorporated the recommended changes into the revised MUR. He asked whether the Board supported contacting the Agency about this issue again. Ms. Deb Waller explained that this will require a change in the *Federal Register*, and the next update for wastewater probably will not occur within the next 4 years. She thought that EPA had indicated that insufficient data were available to make the changes. Dr. Leibovitz thought that EPA should review the data and commission a study to make a decision on this issue.

Dr. Richard Burrows (TestAmerica, Inc.) explained that OW had explained to him and Mr. Scott Siders (Illinois EPA) that the Agency needed more data, including data on acrolein spikes in a variety of different wastewater matrices. It may be appropriate for EPA regional laboratories to participate in the data collection effort; such an effort must be organized for the Agency to make the recommended changes. Dr. Leibovitz commented that ELAB could provide EPA with information about avenues for additional data. He knows of commercial laboratories that have volunteered to participate in such an effort, but he did not know if it is within the Board's purview to provide the names of commercial laboratories to EPA. Mr. O'Farrell will research this. Dr. Burrows commented that the American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL) could identify commercial laboratories willing to participate in data collection. ELAB also should recommend that EPA's regional laboratories be involved in data collection.

Improving Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Congener Method Option

Dr. Pujari explained that EPA had funded a project and selected a contract laboratory to evaluate 50 to 60 PCB congeners. After receiving the data from the laboratory, the Agency decided to expand the project to include an additional five or six contract laboratories to evaluate interlaboratory variation, and this study is ongoing. EPA is unable to release the data at this time.

For the newer ELAB members, Dr. Pujari summarized the background of this topic. ELAB had previously focused on streamlining Method 1668, which is a complex and expensive method for

laboratories to follow. After the Board approached the Agency regarding this issue, Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) established an effort to develop a simplified PCB congener method using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

Dr. Leibovitz noted that this topic will return to the inactive topics list until EPA is able to release the data or provide more information on the revised method.

Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved Methods

Ms. Waller explained that she had not received any comments on the draft letter that she had submitted to the Board, which outlined a request that EPA to use the most recently approved methods. This will help laboratories that work on both drinking water and wastewater because they will not need to maintain two different standard operating procedures as a result of editorial changes to methods. Dr. Leibovitz said that it would be helpful for EPA to not approve (i.e., remove) the older methods. Ms. Waller agreed and will revise the letter to include this point and send it to the Board members for their review.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dr. Leibovitz noted that Dr. Burrows, during the January face-to-face meeting, had requested that the Board consider establishing a Task Group to develop a proposal that EPA further revise and improve Methods 608.3, 624.1 and 625.1 during the next MUR cycle. As Dr. Burrows had to leave the teleconference and was not present to provide additional details about his request, Dr. Leibovitz will contact him to obtain these additional details.

Dr. Delaney thought that part of Dr. Burrows' concern was in regard to an OW paper about how the new method detection limit (MDL) procedure applied to drinking water. Ms. Waller explained that various regions are providing instructions about this; Region 2 has given her laboratory instructions on how to handle the MDL procedure. She wondered whether she could share this information with ELAB, as it is public information. Dr. O'Farrell did not see a problem with the information being shared. Dr. Leibovitz commented that the main question is whether the OW paper was intentionally written to be open for interpretation; every state will have a different interpretation. The Board should ask EPA about its intent because this will help commercial laboratories moving forward. After gathering more information, ELAB can discuss this issue further during the March meeting.

Mr. Flournoy wanted to make sure that ELAB was focusing on topics and issues that are important to the laboratory community. This was brought up during the Board's face-to-face meeting, as well as at a recent ACIL subcommittee meeting. As the DFO, Ms. Phelps forwarded all inquiries to ELAB that were received from the Board's website, and the Board has dealt with all of them. All issues brought forward from the community during face-to-face meetings and teleconference also have been considered by ELAB. Dr. O'Farrell will continue to forward to the Board any comments received through ELAB's website.

Dr. Leibovitz and the Board members thanked Ms. LeBaron for her service to ELAB, as this is her final Board meeting serving as support contractor.

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. Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Waller seconded the motion. The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Attachment A

AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 202-991-0477/7939251#
February 21, 2018; 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST

Call to Order/Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Leibovitz/LeBaron
Approval of Prior Minutes	Leibovitz
Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO	O'Farrell
Updates on Current Topics	
Cyanide Methodology: Delaney	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
User-Generated Library Acceptance Criteria: Buckley	
Addressing Emerging Contaminants: Mertens	
Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH: Pujari	
Improving PCB Congener Method Option: Pujari	
Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved Methods: Waller	
Inactive Topics	
Whole Effluent Toxicity Proficiency Study Standards: Leibovitz	
Drinking Water Certification Officer Training Course: Mertens	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives: Leibovitz	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Leibovitz
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Leibovitz/LeBaron
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Leibovitz/O'Farrell

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	Dr. Thomas O'Farrell (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
N	Mr. Jeff Loewe	NiSource, Inc. Representing: Industry—NiSource, Inc.
Y	Mr. Brad Meadows	Babcock Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Commercial Laboratory—Babcock Laboratories, Inc.
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	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. Lara Phelps (Transitioning DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Y	Ms. Kristen LeBaron (Contractor)	The Scientific Consulting Group, Inc. (SCG)
Y	Dr. Richard Burrows (Guest)	TestAmerica, Inc.

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ms. LeBaron will finalize the January meeting minutes and send them via email to Dr. O'Farrell.
2. Board members who have suggestions for potential ELAB members for the upcoming term will contact Dr. O'Farrell.
3. Dr. Delaney will determine whether he is comfortable serving as Chair, and if not, the Board will determine the next steps.
4. Dr. O'Farrell will email the Board members with a list of eligible Vice-Chair nominees.
5. Dr. Leibovitz will forward EPA's response regarding SIM to the Board members, and Dr. Delaney will schedule a teleconference with those ELAB members who wish to participate in this effort.
6. Dr. Leibovitz will address and send the approved cyanide response letter to Mr. Ross, copying Mr. Hautman and the other members of the OW group who worked on the issue.
7. Dr. Buckley will draft a letter regarding EPA suspension of tuning criteria; Mr. O'Farrell will research the appropriate recipient.
8. Mr. O'Farrell will research whether it is appropriate for the Board to provide EPA with the names of commercial laboratories willing to participate in a data collection effort regarding acrolein and acrylonitrile preservation and pH.
9. Ms. Waller will revise the letter regarding drinking water program adoption of recent approved methods and send it to the Board for review.
10. Dr. Leibovitz will contact Dr. Burrows to obtain additional information about his request about improving Methods 608.3, 624.1 and 625.1 during the next MUR cycle.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on February 21, 2018.

Thomas J. O'Farrell, 3/22/18
Signature, Designated Federal Officer

Dr. Thomas O'Farrell
Print Name, D.F.O.



Signature, Chair

Dr. Henry Leibovitz
Print Name, Chair