

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



## **ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**Monthly Teleconference: 202-991-0477/7939251#, January 28, 2019; 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB or Board) face-to-face meeting was held on January 28, 2019 in Milwaukee, WI at the NELAC Institute (TNI) Forum on Environmental Accreditation. The agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A, a list of meeting participants is provided as Attachment B, and action items are included as Attachment C. The official certification of the minutes by the Chair or Vice-Chair and the Designated Federal Officer is included as Attachment D.

### **ROLL CALL/ INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Sharon Mertens called the meeting to order. Dr. Thomas O'Farrell called roll.

### **APPROVAL OF THE PRIOR MINUTES**

The December 2018 ELAB meeting minutes are not ready to be approved, but they will be for the February 2019 meeting.

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

Dr. O'Farrell welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending on short notice. He reminded attendees calling in to mute phone lines to avoid unnecessary background noise. He announced that he was sharing the PowerPoint to everyone on the conference phone line.

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

For the benefit of the audience, Ms. Mertens reviewed the ELAB FACA Charter. Dr. Delaney reviewed the ELAB progress since the August face-to-face meeting.

#### ***User-Generated Mass Spectral Library Acceptance Criteria***

Dr. Michael Delaney presented this topic on behalf of Dr. Brian Buckley. Regarding EPA mass spectrometry methods, the task group is suggesting criteria that would allow labs to generate their own mass spectral libraries, tuning criteria and when to use NIST libraries, and what reference materials (cholesterol, e.g.) can be used to evaluate performance. ELAB sent a letter to EPA October 2018 regarding this topic. Dr. O'Farrell announced that a response was received

from the Office of Water and Mr. Adrian Hanley, and he aims to share that within a week. Also, another response will be coming from OLEM.

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

This topic was presented by Mr. Brad Meadows. ELAB reviewed the analysis requirements for acrolein and acrylonitrile in wastewater, specifically whether the pH needs to be preserved in analysis samples. In June 2014, ELAB recommended that the EPA drop method 603, in favor of method 624. The EPA response was that there was insufficient data to change the method of preservation. In 2017, acrolein and acrylonitrile analysis was included in method 624.1. However, the requirements were the same. In May 2018, ELAB sent another letter to the EPA requesting a change in the preservation requirement. The letter included supplemental data from industry stakeholders. The EPA responded that while the data supported the request, the scope of the study was too limited. ELAB decided to conduct a more comprehensive study, and to include the EPA Office of Water in the development. ELAB also enlisted the help of ACIL, who will be recruiting volunteers in the industry to submit data for the study in a month or so. Dr. O'Farrell reminded ELAB that Mr. Hanley suggested that once a study protocol has been drafted, he should be consulted before the study is conducted.

### ***600-Series Methods***

Dr. Henry Leibovitz presented this topic. ELAB is considering the concerns of industrial labs for EPA method 608.3, 624.1, and 625. Dr. Leibovitz will convene a task group and would like for the laboratory community to provide input.

### ***OGWDW Guidance on Drinking Water MDLs***

This topic was presented by Ms. Debra Waller. In August 2018, a lab representative raised concerns about the EPA's latest documents on Drinking Water MDLs. It was unclear whether this document was meant to be used as a guidance or policy. There was a discussion on how the different states handle these documents differently. Dr. Delaney, Ms. Mertens, and Ms. Waller formed a task group, and they are working on drafting a letter to the EPA asking for more transparency and clarity. They will bring the letter to the Board for approval in February.

### ***Inactive Topics***

#### ***a) Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF)/Data Quality Objective Process***

Dr. Leibovitz stated that ELAB submitted a letter to the EPA in October 2018. It included ELAB's final recommendations for this topic: 1) primary contractors should involve labs early in the planning process because it is important for having successful projects 2) ACIL and EBI should educate primary contractors on how to engage laboratories in the project planning process. This topic is now closed.

#### ***b) Cyanide Methodology***

Dr. Delaney stated that this topic is awaiting input from the EPA. ELAB previously provided the



EPA with recommendations, and the EPA agreed to revise their guidance.

*c) Improved PCB Congener Method*

Dr. Delaney presented this topic. ELAB recommended to the EPA a simple method for using low resolution MS for PCB congeners in wastewater. Mr. Adrian Hanley (EPA) developed a method, and the single lab validation is complete. A multi-lab validation is in progress. The method has not been released to avoid it becoming a de facto standard before the method is complete. The method validation is expected to be completed in the Spring.

*d) Whole Effluent Toxicity PT Standards*

Dr. Leibovitz presented this topic. ELAB reviewed a white paper on proficiency testing (PT) for Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET), as requested by TNI. ELAB submitted a response in May 2017. The response was 1) Labs should follow WET PT conditions and instructions identified in the study 2) WET PT programs should drop NOEC requirement so that labs must only submit one endpoint each for acute and chronic tests.

There are two conflicting ideas regarding WET PT testing within EPA. The first: All labs should use the same conditions so that all PT samples are comparable. The second: All labs should use the conditions mandated by their wastewater treatment permit for PT testing. Dr. Leibovitz suggested the adoption of a Quality Control Sample (QCS) as a solution for both ideas. A QCS would ensure the conditions that satisfy the permit produce results that are satisfactory for a WET PT study. Labs would be able to produce results that are comparable for a PT study while satisfying their permits. ELAB and TNI have submitted recommendations to the EPA.

Dr. Delaney suggested inviting Mr. Greg Savitske (EPA) and Ms. Lynn Bradley (TNI), along with the TNI WET PT testing committee members to the next ELAB meeting. Ms. Mertens and Dr. Leibovitz supported this idea. Ms. Mertens suggested someone present this idea at the next TNI meeting. Dr. Delaney commented that the TNI meetings occur simultaneously with ELAB meetings, so someone from TNI would need to be willing to miss a meeting. Ms. Mertens proposed that instead of someone missing the TNI meeting, Mr. Savitske could attend the next TNI meeting. Ms. Stacie Crandall volunteered to be added to the PT testing task group. Dr. Delaney expressed interest in inviting Ms. Waller to the task group because she audits WET labs. He will ask Mr. Savitske and Ms. Bradley if they will participate in a WET PT task group meeting.

*e) In-Line/On-Line Monitoring Interagency*

Mr. Michael Flournoy stated there are no updates on this topic.

*f) Addressing Emerging Contaminants*

Ms. Mertens provided updates on this topic. The current process for addressing emerging contaminants is slow and inefficient. ELAB has asked the EPA if they have any requests from ELAB to help streamline the process. The EPA responded yes but has not shared specific details

to date. There are many groups working on solutions for this broad topic.

Ms. Mertens asked the audience for any questions or concerns. An audience member asked Ms. Mertens to clarify whether she was discussing drinking water or wastewater issues. She replied both. Then he asked how the Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) and the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rules (UCMR) and other entities working on drinking water can be used to develop matrices on other emerging contaminants. Dr. Delaney suggests inviting a PFAS analysis expert to the next ELAB meeting to talk about this issue.

*g) Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved Methods*

Ms. Waller, and this task group, previously submitted a letter to EPA asking EPA to only allow the most recently approved version of the drinking water method. Dr. O'Farrell replied that EPA OW will be providing a response to the letter.

*h) Selected Ion Monitoring*

Dr. Delaney said ELAB sent a letter to EPA suggesting minimum criteria for Selected Ion Monitoring. The EPA provided comments on the criteria. ELAB revised the criteria and sent another letter to EPA and is awaiting further input from EPA. He suggested removing this topic from next agendas.

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

*a) What does the laboratory community want ELAB to work on?*

There were no comments. People can email suggestions to EPA.

*b) Is EPA following its policy and guidance on method validation?*

Ms. Mertens addressed this question, stating the EPA has implemented methods that have not been properly validated. ELAB is working on a letter asking EPA to follow their policy requiring methods to be validated before promulgation.

An audience member informed ELAB that at the last NEMC they had a meeting regarding method validation. He raised concerns about the definition of validation: some people view multi-lab studies as validation, while others do not. He is working in a group to develop a document on how to define validation and how to validate methods before the multi-lab study.

Dr. Delaney will discuss this issue during the February meeting.

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

1. Dr. O'Farrell and Dr. Delaney will complete the draft December minutes and distribute.
2. Dr. Leibovitz will convene a meeting of the 600 Series Methods task group.



3. Dr. Delaney will invite EPA (Greg Savitske and perhaps someone from compliance) and the TNI WET Committee to discuss WET PTs at either an ELAB meeting or a task group meeting. Additional members may be added to the task group (Stacey Crandall and perhaps Ms. Waller).
4. Ms. Mertens, Ms. Waller, and Dr. Delaney will complete a draft of the DW MDL letter.
5. Dr. O'Farrell will follow up with OW on a response to the DW methods letter.
6. Dr. O'Farrell will provide Dr. Delaney and Dr. Buckley with any EPA comments on the MS Library letter.
7. Dr. Delaney will look at the EPA method validation documents and suggest how ELAB should pursue.
8. Mr. Meadows will continue to follow up with ACIL on the possible acrolein/acrylonitrile wastewater preservation study. A draft study plan should be sent to Adrian Hanley for review.
9. The SIM and IDQTF topics will be taken off the "inactive" list.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT**

The February 2019 ELAB Meeting will be held on February 20, 2019 at 1 pm Eastern.

Ms. Mertens moved to adjourn, and it was passed.

[epawebconferencing.acms.com/ofarrell1/](http://epawebconferencing.acms.com/ofarrell1/)

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|-------|--|------------------|
| I.    | Call Meeting to Order  | Waller           |
| II.   | Introduction of Board Members/Roll Call                          | Board            |
| III.  | Approval of Minutes for Previous Meeting                         | Waller           |
| IV.   | Remarks and Updates from the DFO                                 | O'Farrell        |
| V.    | Updates on Current Topics  |                  |
|       | a. User-Generated Library Acceptance Criteria.....               | Delaney/Buckley  |
|       | b. Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH.....           | Meadows          |
|       | c. 600-Series Methods .....                                      | Leibovitz        |
|       | d. OGWDW Guidance on Drinking Water MDLs .....                   | Delaney          |
|       | f. Inactive topics awaiting feedback/input:                      |                  |
|       | ▪ Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objective     |                  |
|       | Process.....   | Leibovitz        |
|       | ▪ Cyanide Methodology .....                                      | Delaney          |
|       | ▪ Improved PCB Congener Method .....                             | Delaney          |
|       | ▪ Whole Effluent Toxicity proficiency study standards.....       | Leibovitz        |
|       | ▪ In-Line/On-Line Monitoring.....                                | Flournoy         |
|       | ▪ Addressing Emerging Contaminants .....                         | Mertens          |
|       | ▪ Drinking Water Program Adoption of Recent Approved             |                  |
|       | Methods .....  | Waller           |
|       | ▪ Selected Ion Monitoring .....                                  | Delaney          |
| VI.   | New Topics/Issues for Consideration                              | Waller           |
|       | ○ What does the Laboratory community want ELAB to work on?       |                  |
|       | ○ Is EPA following its policy and guidance on method validation? |                  |
| VII.  | Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items                                  | O'Farrell/Waller |
| VIII. | Closing Remarks/Adjourn  | O'Farrell/Waller |

**Attachment B****PARTICIPANTS LIST**

<b>Board Members Attendance (Y/N)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney (Chair)	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)  Representing: MWRA
Y	Mr. Michael Flournoy (Vice- Chair)	Eurofins Environment Testing USA  Representing: American Council of Independent Laboratories
Y	Dr. Thomas O'Farrell (DFO)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  Representing: EPA
N	Dr. Kim Anderson	Oregon State University  Representing: Academia- Oregon State University
N	Dr. Brian Buckley	Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute  Representing: Academia and Laboratory—Rutgers
Y	Dr. Francoise Chauvin	NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection  Representing: NYCDEP
Y	Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong	Chevron Energy Technology Company



		Representing: Chevron
Y	Ms. Stacie Crandall	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: HSRD
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
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	Mr. Richard Gossett	PHYSIS Labs Representing: PHYSIS Labs
Y	Mr. David Thal	Environmental Standards Inc. Representing: Environmental Standards Inc.
Y	Dr. Jayesh Gandhi	Metrohm USA Representing: Metrohm USA
Y	Ms. Debra (Deb) Waller	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Representing: State

		Government—NJDEP
Y	Mr. Ray Frederici	TestAmerica Representing: TestAmerica

PARTICIPANTS LIST (CONT)

Contractors and Guests Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
N	Ms. Alexis Bryant	Contractor at EPA

## Attachment C

### Action Items

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2. Dr. Leibovitz will convene a meeting of the 600 Series Methods task group.
3. Dr. Delaney will invite EPA (Greg Savitske and perhaps someone from compliance) and the TNI WET Committee to discuss WET PTs at either an ELAB meeting or a task group meeting. Additional members may be added to the task group (Stacey Crandall and perhaps Ms. Waller).
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9. The SIM and IDQTF topics will be taken off the "inactive" list.



**Attachment D**

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on January 28, 2019.

Michael F. Delaney

X

Dr. Michael Delaney  
Chair

X

Thomas O'Farrell, 2/7/19

Dr. Thomas O'Farrell  
Designated Federal Officer

