



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 10 2014

OFFICE OF WATER

Patsy Root, Chair  
Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board  
IDEXX Laboratories  
1 IDEXX Drive  
Westbrook, ME 04092

Dear Ms. Root:

On behalf of the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM), I would like to thank the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) for your report on the helium shortage impact on the analytical community.

The FEM reviewed ELAB's December 18, 2013 report during our quarterly meeting on February 5, 2014 and found it extremely thoughtful and informative. Although the immediate shortage of helium has been alleviated, the long-term problem from helium being a nonrenewable resource is an important technical consideration to address in the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's or the Agency's) applications. The FEM members discussed mechanisms to disseminate the ELAB's recommendations to laboratories across the Agency and look forward to ELAB also posting its response to EPA on their website so that others may benefit from the information available. One small point we would like to clarify is that no EPA program office has taken a position on any alternative other than hydrogen as a gas chromatographic (GC) carrier gas at this point in time.

We want to again thank you and the other members of ELAB for all the work you do to assist the Agency in improving programs for organizations involved in environmental data activities. Please continue to send us your comments and suggestions, since ELAB serves as an important mechanism for the FEM to keep abreast of important issues facing the monitoring community and to receive the community's input on our activities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-564-5700 or [shapiro.mike@epa.gov](mailto:shapiro.mike@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Shapiro".

Michael Shapiro  
Chair, FEM

Attachment

Cc: Lara Phelps, OSA  
FEM Membership