

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Monthly Teleconference Meeting: 866-299-3188/9195415544#
February 17, 2016; 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 17, 2016. 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 OF GUESTS

Ms. Patty Carvajal, Chair of ELAB, and Ms. Lara Phelps, Designated Federal Official (DFO) of ELAB, welcomed participants to the teleconference and called the roll of the Board members and guests.

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES FROM THE DFO

Ms. Phelps announced that Dr. Henry Leibovitz had been selected as the next ELAB Vice-Chair.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Ms. Phelps explained that minutes from the face-to-face meeting would be forthcoming when the support contract is approved and activated.

UPDATES ON CURRENT TOPICS

Methods Harmonization

Dr. Dallas Wait explained that the focus of the discussion would be to obtain the Board's feedback on the letter to EPA regarding methods harmonization, of which ELAB members had received a copy by email. He requested volunteers who would provide a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) check of the tables attached to the letter. The purpose of the tables is to provide an overview of comparable methods that could be harmonized; the tables are not intended to serve as a comprehensive comparison of the methods.

Dr. Mahesh Pujari asked whether it was acceptable that drinking water methods were included. Ms. Phelps explained that if the Board thinks that methods harmonization can be considered across different media, a general comment can be made to this effect while stating that the current letter and tables focus on a specific medium. Dr. Wait noted that the letter currently states that the effort focused on an aqueous matrix.

Dr. Pujari indicated that he had provided a QA/QC check of the chlorinated herbicide gas chromatography methods, ion chromatography methods, and the metals by ICP/MS methods tables. The remaining three tables had not undergone a QA/QC check outside of the Task Group. Dr. Leibovitz volunteered to provide a QA/QC check of the three remaining tables.

Dr. Leibovitz noted that some laboratory assessments allow for modifications that meet the requirements of a more stringent method. He asked whether this point should be included in the letter. Dr. Pujari commented that legal issues existed in terms of laboratory reporting in these cases. Dr. Wait stated that this is not the purpose of the letter, which is to suggest the harmonization of certain items within the methods; he provided an example to highlight his point. The consensus at the face-to-face meeting was that this letter would not include specific recommendations.

Dr. Liebovitz, Dr. Mike Delaney and Mr. Michael Flournoy agreed with the approach of the letter. Dr. Wait reiterated that this letter reflects the consensus of ELAB, so each of the members should be comfortable with its content. Ms. Phelps strongly agreed, reminding the members that even though a great deal of work is completed in Task Groups, final products are a reflection of the full Board. She congratulated the Board on this undertaking, noting that ELAB should take credit for this achievement within the letter. Ms. Phelps advised the Board to allow Ms. Kristen LeBaron (SCG) to edit the letter when the forthcoming support contract becomes active. She also suggested that the brief synopsis be included as Attachment 1; its current placement interrupts the flow of the letter.

Dr. Wait will revise the letter based on Ms. Phelps' recommendations and any additional input that he receives regarding the QA/QC of the tables. His goal is for the Board to vote on the finalized letter by April. Ms. Phelps said that the next quarterly meeting of the Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) will be held on May 4. If ELAB approves the letter by its April meeting, Ms. Phelps can ensure that it is on the FEM's agenda.

Interagency Data Quality Task Force (IDQTF)/Data Quality Objective (DQO) Process

Dr. Leibovitz explained that he had agreed during the face-to-face meeting to write a summary of the recommendations presented during that meeting. The overarching idea is that the issue cannot be further pursued by ELAB, as the next step is to develop training for prime contractors so that they understand the importance of including laboratories early in the process. Therefore, perhaps The NELAC Institute (TNI) or the American Council of Independent Laboratories could take the next step to move this effort forward, possibly by establishing communication with engineering groups or sponsoring a session during an appropriate meeting. This may be a difficult task, but it is necessary. Dr. Leibovitz will develop the letter so that it can be approved by the Board by April.

In-Line and On-Line Monitoring

Mr. Flournoy reported that the Task Group had not met since the face-to-face meeting. The next step will be to work with EPA's Office of Research and Development and Office of Water to identify recommendations or advice that the Board can provide. There is a good deal of momentum regarding this effort in the Agency.

Qualification of Drinking Water Data

Ms. Carvajal reported that the letter regarding this effort had been sent to EPA. Dan Hautman (EPA) indicated that his office would draft a response, but the office's highest priority is dealing with the drinking water issues in Flint, Michigan.

Selected Ion Monitoring (SIM)

Dr. Delaney explained that the Task Group would hold its initial meeting during the first part of March and provide an update during ELAB's March meeting. His goal is to identify minimum requirements for successful SIM methods. Ms. Carvajal indicated that some individuals had expressed interest in helping the Board with this issue; she will forward their contact information to Dr. Delaney. Ms. Phelps confirmed that these individuals would be able to attend Task Group teleconferences. The Board is allowed to consult outside expertise as often as needed or desired, particularly to ensure that ELAB products represent the Board and are of the highest quality possible.

NEW TOPICS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Board received an inquiry about whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing that it will need to consider. Dr. Leibovitz and Ms. Aurora Shields had read the letter, but neither of them has expertise in this area. Ms. Carvajal noted that TNI has established a WET Expert Committee, which has developed a white paper; the group could be invited to participate in this effort with the Board. Ms. Carvajal thought proficiency testing issues also had arisen around this topic.

In response to a question from Dr. Wait, Ms. Phelps explained that the next face-to-face meeting would be held from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. PDT on Monday, August 8, 2016, in Orange County, California. The larger conference will include exciting keynote speakers. The National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) created an award in memory/honor of Dr. Charlie Carter. Applications are due each year on December 31, with the awardee notified each February. The awardee then will deliver the first keynote speech on the first morning of NEMC each August. The first recipient has recently been selected, and everyone is looking forward to the first presentation of the award and the inaugural keynote speech at NEMC this August.

A *Federal Register* notice regarding the next ELAB membership cycle will be published soon. When it is available, Ms. Phelps can provide it to the members so that they can circulate it, with the goal of increasing the number of Board members during the next term. Those members interested in serving another term will need to provide Ms. Phelps with letters of interest indicating which groups they would be representing and updated resumes; it would be helpful for members to provide these by the March meeting. Board diversity, which includes broad expertise and backgrounds, is important, and academic representation on ELAB always has been a struggle. It is important to perform as much outreach to this community as possible during the membership drive.

Ms. Phelps explained that she had sent the members a recurring Microsoft Outlook invitation for all of the 2016 ELAB meetings.

WRAP-UP/SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Carvajal reviewed the action items identified during the meeting, which are included as Attachment C.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Phelps thanked Ms. Carvajal for her service as Vice-Chair and Chair, serving longer than most as a result of an internal transition. She has done a wonderful job leading the Board. The Board members added their thanks. Ms. Carvajal in turn thanked the members for their support.

Dr. Wait moved to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Leibovitz seconded the motion. The Board approved a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 2:25 p.m.

Attachment A

**AGENDA
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD
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Roll Call/Introduction of Guests	Carvajal/Phelps
Opening Remarks and Updates From the DFO	Phelps
Approval of Prior Minutes	Wait
Updates on Current Topics	All
Methods Harmonization: Wait	
Interagency Data Quality Task Force/Data Quality Objectives Process: Leibovitz	
In-Line and On-Line Monitoring: Flournoy	
Qualification of Drinking Water Data: Carvajal	
Selected Ion Monitoring: Delaney	
New Topics/Issues for Consideration	Carvajal
Wrap-Up/Summary of Action Items	Carvajal/Phelps
Closing Remarks/Adjournment	Phelps/Wait

Attachment B**PARTICIPANTS LIST****Board Members**

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Ms. Patricia (Patty) Carvajal (Chair)	San Antonio River Authority Representing: Watershed/Restoration
Y	Dr. A. Dallas Wait (Vice-Chair)	Gradient Representing: Consumer Products Industry
Y	Ms. Lara Phelps, DFO	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
Y	Dr. Michael (Mike) Delaney	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Representing: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
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	Ms. Sylvia (Silky) Labie	Environmental Laboratory Consulting & Technology, LLC Representing: Third-Party Assessors
Y	Dr. Henry Leibovitz	Rhode Island State Health Laboratories Representing: Association of Public Health Laboratories
Y	Dr. Mahesh Pujari	City of Los Angeles Representing: National Association of Clean Water Agencies
N	Ms. Patsy Root	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Laboratory Product Developers
Y	Ms. Aurora Shields	City of Lawrence, Kansas Representing: Wastewater Laboratories
N	Ms. Michelle Wade	Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Representing: Laboratory Accreditation Bodies

Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

1. Dr. Leibovitz will provide a QA/QC check of attachments 1, 4 and 5 of the methods harmonization letter.
2. Dr. Wait will revise the methods harmonization letter based on Ms. Phelps' recommendations and any input he receives regarding the QA/QC of the tables.
3. Dr. Leibovitz will develop a letter with recommendations regarding the IDQTF/DQO process effort.
4. Ms. Carvajal will forward to Dr. Delaney contact information for individuals willing to assist ELAB with the SIM effort.
5. The Board will invite the TNI WET Expert Committee to provide a briefing during a future ELAB meeting.
6. Board members interested in serving another term will provide Ms. Phelps with letters of interest indicating which groups they will be representing, as well as updated resumes, by the March meeting.
7. Ms. Phelps will provide recordings of ELAB's January and February meetings to Ms. LeBaron, so that when the contract is in place, she can develop the minutes.

Attachment D

I hereby certify that this is the final version of the minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on February 17, 2015.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dallas Wait". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature Chair

Dr. Dallas Wait

Print Name Chair