State Water Resources Control Board

ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELTAC) MEETING
DESIGNATED ELAP OFFICER (DELAPO) REPORT

Monday, November 2, 2026

ELAP ACTIVITES

Voluntary TNI Initiative

ELAP convened an additional stakeholder meeting on September 10 to explore practical scenarios laboratories may encounter once California is reinstated as a full TNI Accrediting Body. Discussion centered on operational transitions and the relationship between a voluntary TNI pathway and existing ELAP requirements. This engagement continues to inform implementation planning and guidance materials.

In early October, ELAP submitted its application to rejoin TNI after the departure in 2014. This is a significant step toward re-establishing California's role within the national accreditation framework. ELAP will share progress updates with ELTAC and the laboratory community as they become available.

Stakeholder Engagement on Full TNI Accreditation Option

ELAP's stakeholder outreach remains strong, with recent sessions sharing information on how a full TNI accreditation option would operate alongside the TNI-2 framework. Stakeholders expressed the need for clarity on how dual pathways may affect laboratories of different sizes and specialties. ELAP will continue targeted engagement to ensure guidance is practical and consistent.

Technical Training and Method Development

17 ELAP staff and assessors from multiple agencies attended training in October at the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) focused on the Region 5 low-level pesticide method. Attendance supports method proficiency, enhances data review capability, and strengthens consistency in method assessment. This training complements ongoing efforts to keep pace with emerging contaminants and evolving analytical technologies.

Inter-Agency Coordination

ELAP continues coordination with our state agency partners on microplastics analysis. Following the addition of microplastics to EPA's Candidate Contaminant List, California's leadership remains evident. ELAP is currently the only accreditation body offering accreditation for two microplastics analytical methods, and ongoing information sharing helps align federal and state efforts for future monitoring and research support.

ELAP developed and provided the Division of Drinking Water district engineers with an internal training on laboratory basics for common tests performed for drinking water compliance. While ELAP routinely aids the Division of Drinking Water, this training should aid District Engineers in asking laboratories the right questions when further data review is necessary.

Conference and Outreach Activities

ELAP presented at the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) annual conference in Sacramento in April, providing program updates and guidance to the laboratory community. The session addressed existing regulatory requirements and frequently asked questions, and it fostered direct engagement on topics of high interest to laboratories across the state.

Applications Metrics

Applications Processed This Year (as of September 2026)

Application Type	Number
New	12
Renewal	139
Reciprocity	47
Amendments	120
Total	**318**

Enforcement Unit

ELAP's Enforcement Unit remains engaged in addressing complaints from State Regulatory Agencies, other laboratories, and whistleblowers. Serious violations and trend-based advisories are posted on the Enforcement website; however, the unit also issues lesser notices and orders based on follow-up data audits or on-site inspections.

REGULATIONS UPDATES

ELAP Fee Regulation Adoption

On September 15, the State Water Board adopted updated ELAP fees that include new components for voluntary full TNI accreditation and clarify amendment application fee language. Existing renewal fees remain unchanged, and laboratories that do not pursue full TNI accreditation will not be subject to the additional TNI fees. These fees will not apply until ELAP receives approval from TNI to offer full TNI accreditation, following review and approval of ELAP's application submitted in October. These changes support program operations and provide laboratories with clear expectations when planning their applications. The new TNI fees will apply only to laboratories that voluntarily seek full TNI accreditation through ELAP.

ELAP STAFFING UPDATES

ELAP welcomed our new Administrative Operations Unit supervisor, Ayah Lababedy, in June. Ayah comes to ELAP from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). During her seven years with CDPH, she worked in healthcare facility licensing and certification. Her work included policy and procedure development, regulatory and data analysis, audit coordination for state oversight agencies, and Public Records Act responses. She advised management on program decisions, handled sensitive and complex issues, and coordinated between headquarters, district offices, and external stakeholders. We are glad to have her on the ELAP team.

ELAP’s Program Development, Research, and Enforcement Unit also hired a new staff member, Melody Graham. Mel is an agricultural and environmental scientist with extensive experience in regulatory and program management on California’s Central Coast. She has spent the past nine years with county governments leading sustainable pest management, environmental protection, and program implementation. Before entering regulatory work, she taught high school science and agriculture for five years. She holds a B.S. from CSU Fresno and an M.S. from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.