



Long Beach Water Department
The Standard in Water Conservation &
Environmental Stewardship

Public Comment
ELAP Regulations Development/Laboratory Standard
Deadline:9/16/16 12:00 noon

Christopher J. Garner, General Manager

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California State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Subject: Comment Letter – ELAP Regulations Development/Laboratory Standard

To the Members of the State Water Resources Control Board,

On September 6, 2016, the State Board gave notice that they would be holding a Workshop on proposed changes to the laboratory accreditation regulations. The deadline for the submittal of comments is noon, Friday September 16, 2016 which is nine and one half working days. The focus of the proposed changes is the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program's (ELAP) proposal to use Volume 1 of The NELAC Institute's (TNI) 2016 documents as the basis for laboratory accreditation. Long Beach Water Department Water Quality Laboratory would like to submit the following comments to the Board for consideration on this topic.

- 1) California has more accredited environmental laboratories than any other state. This is a huge and important resource for the people of California for the protection of human health and the environment which should be encouraged to grow. Laboratories accredited by ELAP with only one or two full time staff members are very common and most have five or fewer. This allows many smaller and more remote facilities to be able to have their own laboratory out on the front line. We believe that the State Board should do all it can to encourage the existence and expansion of accredited environmental laboratories in general and those associated with utilities in smaller and more remote locations in particular.
- 2) The scope of the proposed changes are enormous. ELAP is proposing to completely change how it accredits laboratories. Such a momentous endeavor has to be addressed with great care and thoroughness. Experience in other states, such as Florida and New York where all accredited laboratories were required to be TNI compliant, has shown that many smaller laboratories closed. If for no other reason, this experience should give pause to the State

Board in how it moves forward with its proposal to incorporate TNI documents into California's accreditation standards.

3) The proposed TNI documents are hardly a month old and are not publically available. They have to be purchased from TNI for 130 dollars. It seems patently unfair to require the public to purchase documents in order to simply comment on a proposed change to regulation. This is both contrary and not in good faith to all past practice where the public has had access to proposed changes in language. It is hard to see how this comports with the intent of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) which attempts to maximize openness and transparency of the rule making process. Indeed, requiring the purchase of documents would appear to be contrary to the requirements of the APA.

4) The 2016 TNI document is nearly 200 pages long. It seems entirely unreasonable to expect potentially impacted parties to first purchase this document, read it, and then prepare intelligent comments in so short a period of time. The majority of laboratories accredited by ELAP have a small number of employees. It is extremely difficult for laboratories such as these to commit the resources needed to read such a large document at all, with much less in just a few days.

5) We would strongly urge the State Board to significantly postpone this workshop and greatly extend the comment period. It is also extremely important the proposed documents that would form the core of ELAP's new regulations be made publically available for free.

6) We would encourage the Board to consider the following excerpt taken from the April 2011 "Implementing the New TNI Standard" initiative: "The Office of Management and Budget Circular A-119 defines a voluntary consensus standards body as one having the following attributes (i) openness; (ii) balance of interest; (iii) due process; (iv) an appeals process; and (v) consensus..."

Thank you for your attention.

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