



## FAIRFIELD-SUISUN SEWER DISTRICT

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GREGORY G. BAATRUP, GENERAL MANAGER

September 16, 2016

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000



RE: Comment Letter – ELAP Regulations Development/Laboratory Standard

Dear 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. 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 document as the basis for laboratory accreditation. Fairfield – Suisun Sewer District Laboratory (ELAP Certificate No. 2067) would like to submit the following comments to the Board for consideration on this topic.

### Laboratory Community Concerns are Disregarded

Since the beginning the laboratory community has voiced their concerns regarding TNI standards and its effect on small and medium size laboratories if adopted. Additionally, the Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC) recommended adopting a Quality Management System (QMS) building on the USEPA Quality Management System guidelines with added components or a modified TNI QMS, referred to "California Plus" and "TNI Minus" respectively. We were lead to believe the TNI as a whole would not be considered as a QMS for California. To the laboratory community's surprise on September 1, 2016 the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) informed the laboratories through (ELTAC) that ELAP will recommend to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to adopt the 2016 NELAC Institute Standard (TNI 2016).

### Insufficient Time to Submit Comments

On September 6, 2016 the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) sent a notice of opportunity for public comment and announced the workshop for October 6, 2016 regarding the ELAP regulations development for the laboratory standard. The deadline to submit comments is noon on September 16, 2016. This is giving the laboratories 7.5 business days to purchase and review a 176 page document which was recently published and submit comments.

### Increase Workload and Associated Costs

The Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District laboratory is staffed with three full times and one part-time position processing both compliance and process control samples for a 23.7 MGD Dry Weather designed flow. Our laboratory has an enhanced Quality Control and Quality Assurance Program to produce defensible data and is staffed accordingly. The increased workload as a result of TNI

standard requirements will consume staff time and efforts and not necessarily improve data quality. Implementing and maintaining the TNI standard may result in a staffing increase and cause waste of resources which could be spent in other, much needed, areas. Many of the ELAP certified laboratories belong to small agencies with one or two staff. These agencies may be forced to discontinue their laboratory certification. In turn, it will cause a loss of revenue for ELAP which will be passed on to the remaining laboratories. This will increase the financial burden of certification fees which has already significantly increased and has been made clear that it will continue to increase.

#### Environmental Impact

The financial burden of TNI standard will lead to an increase in public agencies closing their laboratories and contracting critical compliance and process monitoring to the contract laboratories. Typical laboratory report turnaround time is 2-3 weeks leaving an unacceptable delay in critical data being available in order to make the necessary treatment plant process adjustments. This, in turn, may cause compliance violations and put at risk public and environmental health.

Fairfield – Suisun Sewer District urges the Water Board to give laboratories adequate time for the review and comment period of the proposed standards and consider adopting a set standard which improves data quality without causing unprecedented financial burdens.

Sincerely,



Giti Heravian,  
Laboratory Manager  
Fairfield – Suisun Sewer District  
ELAP Certificate No.2067