

## commentletters

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**From:** Tim Malte <Tim.Malte@cityofvallejo.net>  
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**Subject:** Comment Letter-ELAP Regulations Development/Laboratory Standard

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board

To Members of the Board

I wish to comment on the California Environmental Accreditation Program (ELAP) proposed recommendation of implementing the 2016 NELAC Institute Standard (TNI 2016), Volume 1 for laboratory accreditation of California environmental laboratories.

I believe the comment period for this proposal is too short for review of such a complex document. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) comment period only started ten days ago. The document isn't readily available for all interested parties because it has to be purchased for review. The document is almost 200 pages long and takes a lengthy time to adequately read, digest and fully understand even if you have a copy. This is especially difficult if your workload is already busy enough. Plus, the new TNI standard only became available just last month. I really think the comment period needs to be extended for this to be a fair process. Please be reasonable and delay the SWRCB public workshop slated for October 6, 2016.

I believe, if implemented, the new TNI 2016 standard will be overly burdensome to environmental laboratories, particularly smaller staffed municipal water and wastewater labs. The standard seems most applicable for larger commercial labs performing sophisticated analyses (metals, organics, etc.) across state lines. The documentation required for maintaining a certified lab will require hours and hours of additional time to incorporate new standard operating procedures, quality control measures, etc. Besides time, additional costs may strain smaller laboratories with consultant fees, attending webinars, on-site training, etc. All this effort may not produce more robust data but may create a paperwork nightmare. I assume many of the smaller laboratories may opt out of maintaining an ELAP accreditation. It may not be worth all the time, effort and money for smaller laboratories. New York and Florida implemented TNI and many of the smaller labs ceased operation. I assume most closed because of the difficulty of implementing the TNI standard. I think the state of California would suffer from full implementation of TNI, especially smaller laboratories with limited resources.

Hopefully, the SWRCB thoroughly considers all concerned parties comments. I hope the board considers all viewpoints not just the ELAP recommendation. Ultimately, I hope ELAP adopts a two tiered laboratory accreditation program or implements the ETLAC recommendation of a laboratory standard based on United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) environmental laboratory guidelines (ETLAC August 24, 2016 meeting). The two tiered approach could use TNI 2016 for large commercial laboratories that perform testing for out of state customers and modified US EPA guidelines for smaller laboratories. If ELAP still prefers one standard for all environmental labs, implement the modified US EPA guidelines for all laboratories. I believe a modified US EPA laboratory quality system standard is more than adequate in ensuring environmental laboratories produce high quality data. If larger commercial laboratories prefer TNI 2016 certification they can still do so on their own. Don't punish the smaller environmental laboratories.

I believe timely water and wastewater quality data may be sacrificed if many small environment labs (over half the environmental labs in the state) end up closing because of full implementation of TNI 2016. Quick, timely, accurate laboratory analyses are much better for Californian interests than shipping out laboratory samples to commercial laboratories where you have to wait for results. On site analyses afford better protection of Californians' public health and environment. Many smaller environmental laboratories presently provide this data. The ELAP laboratory accreditation standard is way overdue for revision. Let's take the time to do it right.

**Tim Malte**

**Water Quality Analyst**

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