

ELAP Progress Update

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State Water Resources Control Board Meeting

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Looking Back

- ▶ We inherited many programmatic problems
 - ▶ No documented processes or procedures
 - ▶ Weak regulations and lack of enforcement of existing requirements
 - ▶ Poor communication and customer service
 - ▶ Resource challenges
 - ▶ Many complaints
- ▶ We have made significant progress
 - ▶ That will be the core of my first presentation
- ▶ As we make progress, we are in a better position to assess how the laboratories are doing
 - ▶ This requires us to move past improving only ELAP to helping labs improve
 - ▶ That will be the focus of my second presentation

ELAP Improvement

- ▶ Implementing an internal quality management system
- ▶ Restructured to create a whole program
- ▶ Enhanced communication
- ▶ Improved training of our staff

Implementing Quality Management System

- ▶ ELAP is now implementing an internal quality management system
 - ▶ We hired a Quality Assurance Officer to manage it
- ▶ Processes and policies are documented
 - ▶ 39 standard operating procedures
 - ▶ Three revisions of our quality assurance manual
- ▶ US EPA audit results have improved every year as a result

Enhanced Communication

- ▶ Established open lines of communication with the community
 - ▶ Multiple email inboxes
 - ▶ Phone duty officer
 - ▶ Webpage and email announcements
 - ▶ Public workshops
 - ▶ Newsletters and updates
 - ▶ Listening Sessions
- ▶ We communicate with labs as applications move through the accreditation process

Enhanced Communication

- ▶ Reestablished relationship with new Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee
 - ▶ 12 meetings total focused on ELAP reform initiatives
 - ▶ Chairperson Stephen Clark will update you today on their activities
- ▶ Created a functional State Agency Partner Advisory Committee
 - ▶ 11 meetings total focused on agency needs
 - ▶ Spokesperson Bruce Labelle will speak to their needs
- ▶ Stakeholder coordination
 - ▶ ELAP serves as a bridge between regulators and the laboratory community
 - ▶ 4 successful workgroups to date

Restructured ELAP

- ▶ ELAP was not fulfilling its core charges
 - ▶ We are now a whole program
- ▶ We created a Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit to continuously monitor laboratories
 - ▶ 4 staff that monitor approximately 16,000 PT results each year
 - ▶ PT results were not previously evaluated
- ▶ We now have an Enforcement program
 - ▶ 3 staff that investigate referrals from our regulatory agency partners, laboratories, and the public
 - ▶ Many enforcement actions taken - more on this later
- ▶ We have a dedicated On-Site Assessment Unit

Improved Staff Training

- ▶ Restructuring ELAP has allowed us to implement specialized training
 - ▶ Staff now focus on their specialty
- ▶ Examples of the specialized trainings we have done:
 - ▶ Enforcement and fraud training
 - ▶ Regulations and rulemaking training
 - ▶ Proficiency testing standards training
 - ▶ Quality assurance training
 - ▶ Hands-on technical method and equipment training
- ▶ A major milestone is the execution of our Assessor Training Contract

Executed Assessor Training Contract

- ▶ The Board has invested \$1.17 million in improving ELAP assessment staff and addressing the Drinking Water laboratory backlog
- ▶ We are shadowing and being trained by expert environmental laboratory assessors from NV5/Dade Moeller
 - ▶ There has been excellent feedback from laboratories about the assessors
- ▶ The primary goal is to increase technical knowledge, consistency, and customer service to address a key stakeholder complaint
 - ▶ Mitzi Miller, NV5/Dade Moeller, will update you on the progress

Next Steps

- ▶ Complete our regulations
- ▶ Provide laboratories with assistance to help them implement the TNI standard
- ▶ Work with the laboratories to improve their procedures based on findings
 - ▶ I'll cover this after the other speakers

Adopt Regulations

- ▶ We need a comprehensive update of program regulations to run ELAP effectively
 - ▶ And to continue with program reforms
- ▶ Recently released our second preliminary draft
 - ▶ Getting to this point has taken longer than we had planned
- ▶ Anticipate entering the rulemaking process in early 2019

Provide Laboratories Assistance with TNI

- ▶ TNI assistance efforts are already underway
 - ▶ Public workshops were held in 2017, recording available online
 - ▶ Assessor training contract is providing complimentary gap analyses to laboratories
- ▶ Industry groups are working with us on this effort
 - ▶ CWEA and AWWA are offering training
 - ▶ ACIL has offered mentoring to non-TNI labs
- ▶ We are working on a documentation workshop expected in 2019
 - ▶ Will provide laboratories with templates and training on the documentation needed to transition to the TNI Standard
- ▶ We are proposing an extended implementation timeline for TNI upon adoption of regulations

Next Speakers

- ▶ Mitzi Miller, Vice President, NV5/Dade Moeller
- ▶ Stephen Clark, Chairperson, Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC)
- ▶ Bruce LaBelle, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Spokesperson, State Agency Partners Advisory Committee (SAPC)