



The California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) Expert Review Panel: Final Report Summary

AUGUST 9, 2017

LARA PHELPS, US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Certificate of Appreciation

Presented in appreciation of

With sincere thanks for

Awarded On _____



HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Executive Summary
- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ Significant progress has been made, but California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) is still not meeting its programmatic goals
- ▶ Assessment
 - ▶ Regaining credibility
 - ▶ Working toward an accreditation process
 - ▶ Created organizational units to help ensure laboratory competency
- ▶ Recommendations
 - ▶ Adopt an accreditation standard
 - ▶ Expand resources

ESTABLISHING ~~POOR~~ CREDIBILITY

- ▶ Credibility – The quality of being trusted and believed in
- ▶ ~~California ELAP lacks~~ **developing** credibility with:
 - ▶ Clients,
 - ▶ Laboratories, and
 - ▶ Other states

Eliminating the 'Gotcha' mentality



INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Management System
- ▶ Organizational Structure
 - ▶ Program Development, Research, and Enforcement Unit
 - ▶ Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit
 - ▶ Onsite Assessment Unit
- ▶ Staff
- ▶ Communication



STANDARD DECISION

CONGRATULATIONS ON SELECTING A STANDARD!!!

- ▶ The stakeholder process took valuable time, but we applaud you for making the decision process inclusive
- ▶ **CRITICAL TO NOW ADOPT THAT STANDARD**
 - ▶ There is a **crucial** difference between identifying and adopting a standard
 - ▶ An implementation strategy that assists the labs in being successful is **critical**
 - ▶ The **consequence** to not immediately adopting that standard, which we hear can take a year, is the continued ineffectiveness of your program

58 MODIFICATIONS

- ▶ ELAP with stakeholder input selected the 2016 TNI Standard with 58 proposed modifications
- ▶ The Panel, however, recommends you adopt the Standard with minimum modifications
 - ▶ All but two of the 58 items are just clarifications, not modifications
 - ▶ Achieve your goals through guidance documents that clarify the Standard
- ▶ Unnecessary to be a 'lone ranger' by creating your own standard
 - ▶ You don't want to isolate yourself from existing training materials and other programmatic resources

IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Plan
 - ▶ It is imperative that you help the laboratories successfully transition
 - ▶ Time is of the essence in getting your program on track
 - ▶ Be reasonable in setting expectations
- ▶ Guidance/Training
 - ▶ Laboratory needs
 - ▶ Assessor needs
 - ▶ Client needs



RESOURCES

- ▶ **THANK YOU** – Training contract is top notch, but without the immediate adoption of a standard some value will be lost
- ▶ More help is **critical** and not without **consequence**:
 - ▶ Third Party
 - ▶ Tools
 - ▶ Accountability

THIRD PARTY

- ▶ **Critical** to eliminate backlog, especially for non-drinking water programs
- ▶ **Critical** to have the access to diversity of expertise needed to meet client needs
- ▶ **Consequence** of not using third parties is an increase in fees to hire more staff due to the new workload

TOOLS

- ▶ Software is available that can significantly help with:
 - ▶ Total management of the accreditation process; and
 - ▶ Management of proficiency testing (PT) program
- ▶ Software will allow for better use of employee time



FUTURE CONSIDERATION

- ▶ **Critical** to focus resources on fundamentals of getting the program operational by achieving established metrics
- ▶ **Critical** to get program functioning before considering further expansion
- ▶ **Consider**, once the program is running smoothly, establishing a future panel to help growth beyond the fundamentals



SUMMARY

- ▶ ELAP is not presently achieving its mission, but there is a path to get there
- ▶ **Critical** for the State to support ELAP's efforts and hold ELAP accountable
- ▶ Panel believes ELAP is:
 - ▶ Regaining credibility
 - ▶ Working toward an accreditation process the State and stakeholders support
 - ▶ Working to reliably ensure environmental and public health data used are of known and documented quality

QUESTIONS???

