Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee
Minutes for December 1, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

Anita Martin, Chester Water Authority (Municipal Authority)
Danielle Cappellini, A.E. Kirby Memorial Health Center (Commercial Environmental Laboratory)
Cristin Geletei, US Steel Clairton works Lab (Industrial Environmental Laboratory)
Joel Jordan, PA Rural Water Association (Association of Community Water Supply Systems)
John Stolz, Department of Biological Services Duquesne University (Academic Laboratory)
Marykay Steinman, Analytical Quality Assistance (General Public Member)
Twila Dixon, M.J. Reider Associates, Inc. (Technical Expertise in Testing and Analysis of Environmental Samples)

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT

Martina McGarvey, Bureau of Laboratories
Laura Griffin, Policy Office
Annmarie Beach, Laboratory Accreditation Program Chief
Jason Minnich, Drinking Water Data Management
Dwayne Burkholder, Laboratory Accreditation Program
Amber Ross, Laboratory Accreditation Program

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

The meeting was called to order by Marykay Steinman at 9:00 am. Initially, there were not enough committee members on the call for a quorum.

INTRODUCTION

Annmarie Beach welcomed everyone. She introduced herself and gave a brief background of her experience and how she arrived at the DEP. Laura Griffin shared introductory remarks, introducing herself as the new regulatory coordinator and gave a brief background of her experience.

QUORUM

At 9:07 am, Marykay Steinman called for a quorum and called for a vote on the minutes from the previous meeting on December 12, 2019. There were no comments or requests for changes to the minutes. John Stolz moved to approve the minutes and Danielle Cappellini seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

CYANOTOXIN ACCREDITATION

Dwayne Burkholder discussed cyanotoxin accreditation. He gave a background on harmful algal blooms (HABs), cyanobacteria, and cyanotoxins. He stated that cyanotoxin accreditation is a new program that is just starting out. He went over accreditation and methods being offered. Testing is typically seasonal because HABs are more of a summer occurrence.

John Stolz asked if a high-tech lab is needed to do testing and if the Department is offering any accreditation for ELISA testing. He stated that ELISA is much easier than LC-MS-MS. Dwayne Burkholder responded that ELISA is the easiest test, so it will be, and is currently, the one used the most. John Stolz stated that he does work with cyanobacteria, so he is curious about the ELISA testing. Martina McGarvey clarified that if think John is asking about ELISA tests' accuracy, The Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) is having success with the ELISA test. She then asked Dwayne Burkholder if the ELISA is positive, then the results must be confirmed with an LC-MS-MS method. Dwayne confirmed that is correct and EPA 546 is the initial test. A positive ELISA must be confirmed with the LC-MS-MS method under UCMR4. Annmarie B. asked if there were any other questions or comments, but there were none.

PFAS AND DEPARTMENT ACCREDITION

Amber Ross gave a presentation on the background of PFAS and the impact of PFAS on humans and animals. She also explained all the differences between EPAS 533 and EPA 537/537.1, as well as explaining how to apply for accreditation and what modifications are allowed and in what matrices. No questions were asked.

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR REPORTING READIOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Jason Minnich asked everyone if they received the guidance document on reporting radiochemical analyses. He then went over some of the changes that were made. Changes in Section 2 on "Responsibilities of the Lab" included making sure that the formatting in this section was updated. Section 2 also goes over requirements for reporting by the 10th of the month; contacting the DEP and client about an MCL exceedance. Section 2 includes a link to access the contact information for Regional and District offices for reporting MCL exceedances. The Safe Drinking Water Program tries to update these numbers yearly. Section 3 covers electronic assistance tools. In Section 4 on "Responsibilities of Water Suppliers", the Department separated out the requirements for different types of radiologicals by specifically splitting up the requirements between natural radiologicals and man-made radiologicals. Section 6 covers analysis methods and contaminate codes for naturally occurring radiologicals. Section 7 is the section for man-made radiologicals, which also discusses MCLs and triggers. Section 8 covers analysis methods and contaminate codes for man-made radiologicals. Section 9 on "Instructions for Submitting Corrections" is a whole new section of the document. The guidance document also includes updated case studies, dates, and screen shots. The last page of the document is the Region office numbers because those typically don't change. Jason Minnich explained that hopefully this guidance document can go into draft form in the 1st or 2nd quarter of next year and asked for questions.

John Stoltz asked if "man-made" is confined to just the nuclear and by-products thereof. Jason Minnich. answered yes. John Stolz inquired if this covered Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (TENORM) as he did not see any reference to TENORM in the document. Jason M. responded that TENORM is not in the regulations, so that is why it's not referenced in this document. John S. asked how is TENORM addressed and who is responsible for determining how often a facility must test. Jason M. responded that monitoring frequency is based on previous results reported. If previous reporting was "non-detect", then re-testing is done every 9 years. If it was detected as ½, then re-testing is done every 6 years. This is in this guidance document and is based on past results. Jason M. responded that BOL provides monitoring calendars, so water systems should know when they have to retest. John S. stated that he has been working on analyzing the discharges at some of the systems in Pittsburgh and is finding detects more frequently than before. He asked if these places should be tested at a greater frequency in the Pittsburgh area.

Jason Minnich explained that John's comment identified a potential need for a regulation change. Jason M. responded that a notice will be sent out when the guidance document is published as a draft and BOL will then wait for public comments. There were no further questions on the guidance document.

Jason Minnich also discussed a second topic. The Safe Drinking Water Program is looking to significantly overhaul Drinking Water Electronic Lab Reporting system (DWELR). DWELR was put together in the mid-2000s. and the technology is outdated. The Department will be sending a survey to users to get their opinion of what does and does not work in DWELR, to hopefully begin the overhaul next year. Jason M. stated that beginning in January 2021, DEP Greenport will look different. The first time that users log in after January 13th, 2021, they will be prompted to get another User ID. After they get the new User ID, they will be prompted to link all DEP Greenport accounts that they have to be under that new User ID. Tutorials will come mid-month (December 2020). After the new User ID is created and accounts are all linked, there will be no further action needed. This is going live January 13, 2021, so after the January 10, 2021 reporting deadline. No questions were asked.

OTHER BUSINESS

Annmarie Beach asked if there were any questions or issues and said the proposed meeting schedule would be sent to LAAC but was not set yet.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Marykay Steinman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Stolz made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Cristin Gelete seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously voted to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am.