

# New Opportunities and Initiatives to Strengthen California's Laboratory Accreditation Program

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Chief of CA ELAP



# Overview

- Origin & Transition of ELAP
- New Leadership
- Responsibilities & Goals
- Comprehensive Program Evaluation
- Size and Scope
- Status of Interim Recommendations
- Future Plans



# Origin of CA ELAP

Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Act, 1988

- Department of Public Health
- Fund - fully fee funded
- Consolidated multiple accreditation programs
- Necessary for primacy



# Comments about ELAP

Inconsistency

ELAP lack standard of practice

Ignored & neglected

A Troubled Program

Assessors lack adequate knowledge of standards & methods

Assessments are uncontrolled highly variable system

poor customer service

**LACK OF APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT & OVERSIGHT**



# Transition

- July 1, 2014 moved to the State Water Board
- Division of Drinking Water & CA ELAP
- Origin of Program Evaluation



# State Water Resources Control Board

- Protect critical water resource for present and future generations
  - 1.6 million acres of lakes
  - 1.3 million acres of bays and estuaries
  - 211,000 miles of rivers and streams
  - 1,100 miles of coastline
  - 7,500 public water systems
- Implement and enforce the Federal and State Clean Water Acts and Safe Drinking Water Acts
- Set statewide policy and regulations
- Distribute millions of dollars for water quality protection
- Allocate water rights



# ELAP Responsibilities

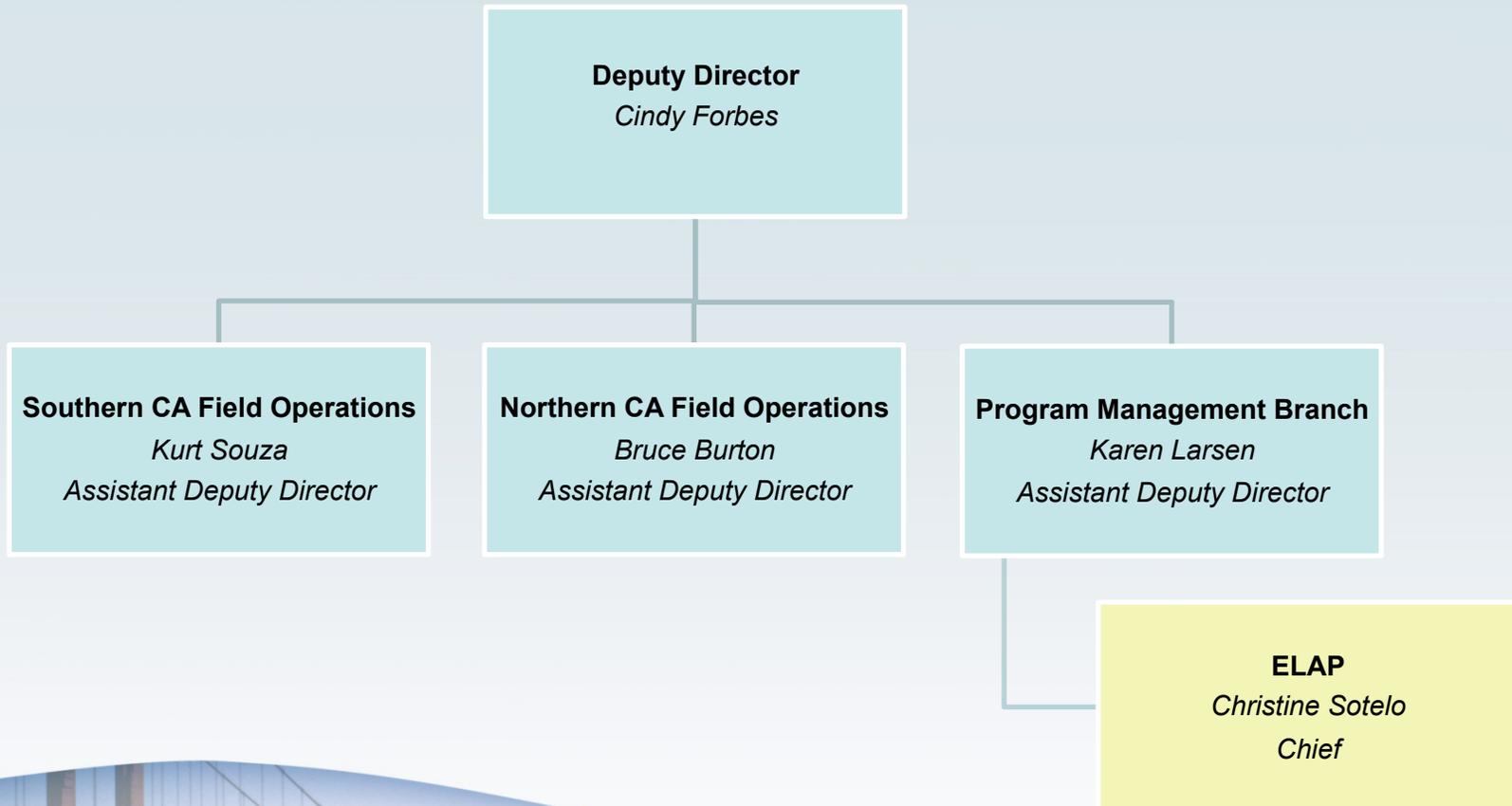
- Ensure quality of analytical data used by CA regulatory programs
- Program Elements
  - Certify
  - Inspect
  - Monitor
  - Enforce



# ELAP Goals

- Meet primary responsibility to CA regulatory agencies
  - Integrate more fully with agency quality systems
  - Close the loop on data quality
- Implement/Review Expert Review Panel Recommendations
  - Standards of practice
  - Training and experience
  - Recognition of 3rd party assessments

# Division of Drinking Water



# California ELAP

27 Staff

- Environmental Program Manager – 1
- Administrative Assistant - 5
- Scientific Aide - 1
- Sr. Environmental Scientist Supervisor – 1
- Sr. Environmental Scientist Specialist – 3
- Environmental Scientist - 3
- Supervising Chemists - 2
- Staff Chemists – 3
- Chemists - 8

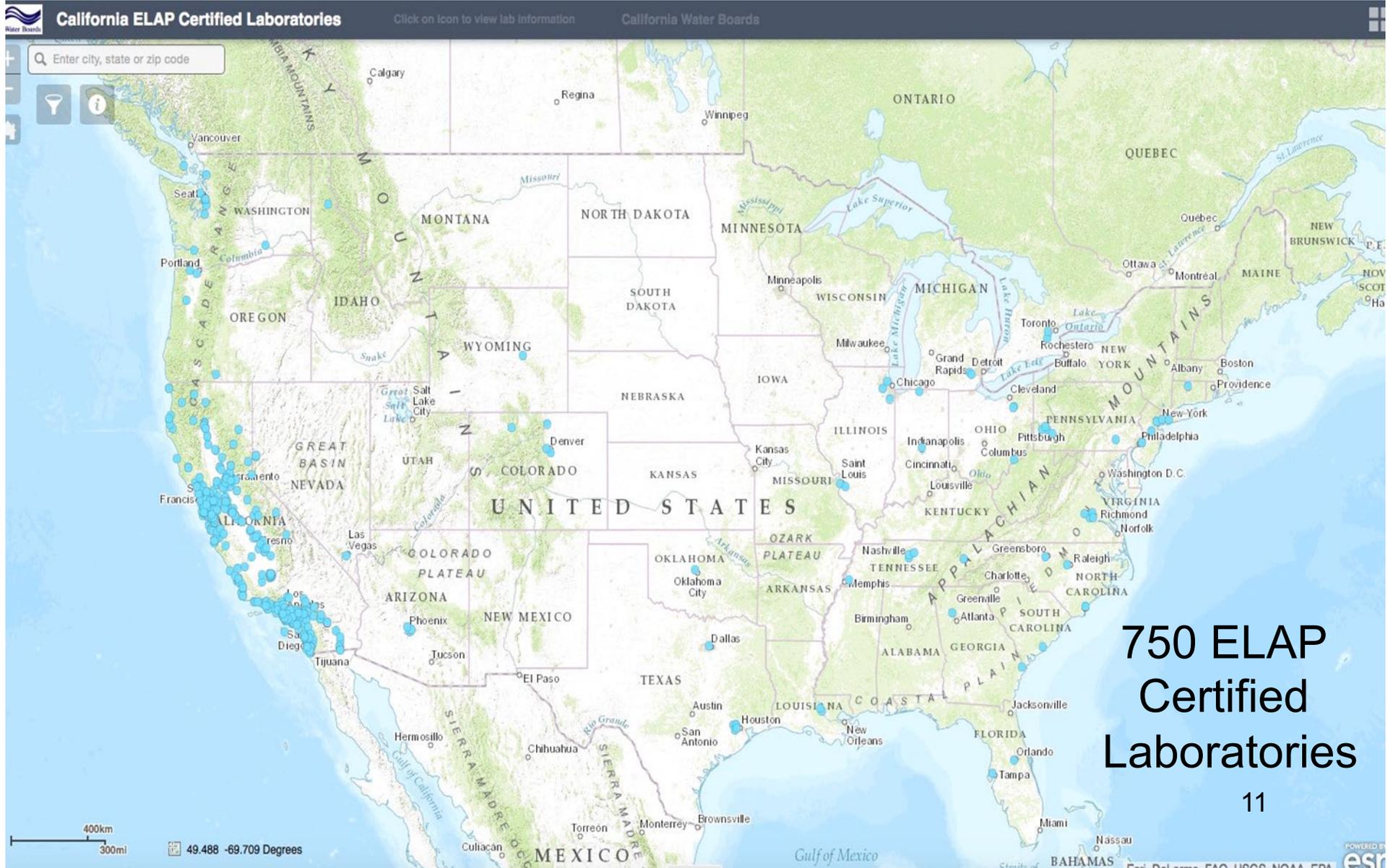
**ELAP**  
*Christine Sotelo*  
*Chief*

**Sacramento**  
*Maryam Khosravifard*

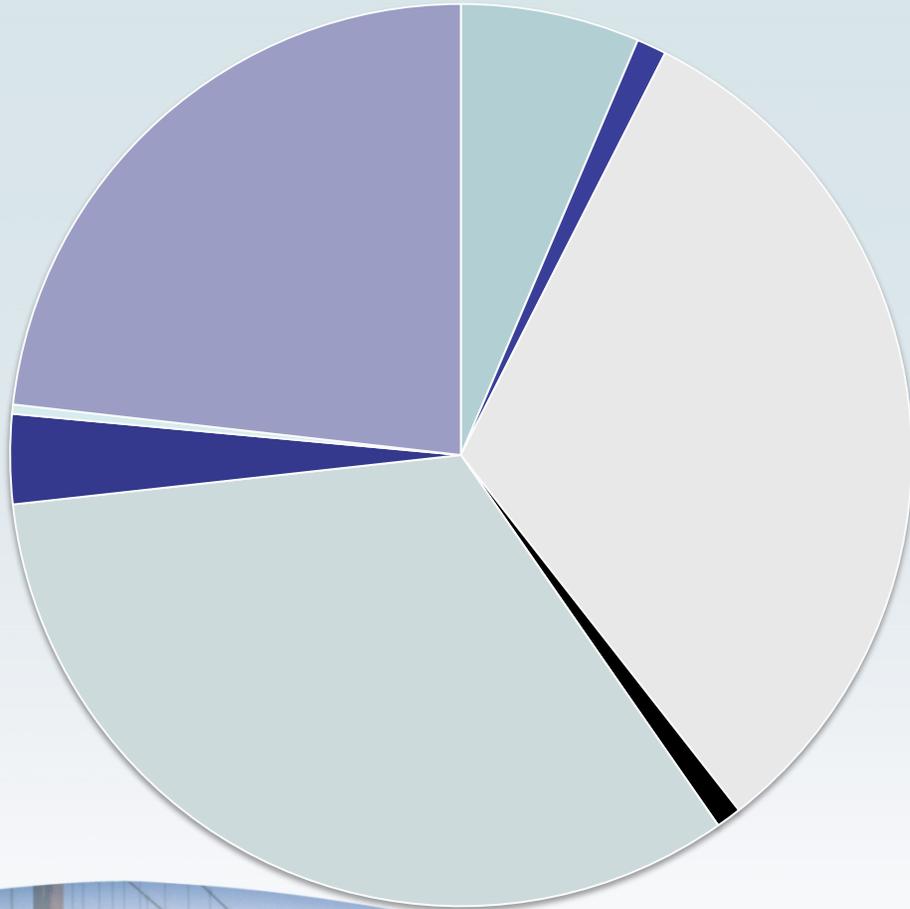
**Richmond**  
*Fred Choske*

**Los Angeles**  
*Angela Anand*

# ELAP Size & Scope



# Fields of Testing



- Aquatic Toxicity - 78
- Asbestos - 13
- Drinking Water - 388
- Food Pesticide - 11
- Hazardous Waste - 400
- Radiochemistry - 39
- Shellfish Sanitation - 4
- Waste Water - 282



# Comprehensive Program Evaluation

- Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
  - Dr. Stephen Weisberg
- Expert Review Panel
  - Dr. Jordan Adelson
  - Stephen Arms
  - Mitzi Miller
  - Lara Phelps
  - David Speis
- Recognize the program has problems
- Charge Questions



# Comprehensive Program Evaluation

- Seeking external, independent advice
- Committing to holding ourselves accountable and transparency
- Draft Report – Fall 2015
- Final Report – Fall 2016



# ERP Interim Recommendations



## Communications Strategy

- Identified audience
- Key Messages
- Vehicles for communication
- Performance Measures
- Matrix for internal & external communications
- Redesigned webpage
- Geographic Information Systems Laboratory Certification Map
- Regular announcements
- Quarterly newsletter
- Refine email subscription



# ERP Interim Recommendations



## Build relationships with ELAP clients

- Meet & Greet Events
  - Two events Spring 2015
  - Two pending Summer/Fall 2015
- Meetings with State Agency Partners
  - Air Resources Board
  - Fish and Wildlife
  - Food and Agriculture
  - Pesticide Regulation
  - Public Health
  - Toxic Substances Control
  - CA Water Board



# ERP Interim Recommendations



## Reenergize the Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC)

- Draft By-Laws Released for Public Comment
  - Transparent process
  - Defined tasks & scope of work
  - Accountability / respond to all recommendations
  - Membership represents laboratory Stakeholders
- New Members – January 2016



# ERP Interim Recommendations



## Methods Checklist Review

- Reviewed all ELAP checklists against current methods
  - Serves as a training tool for staff
  - Established a system for conducting audits
  - Reformatted for clarity and consistency



# ERP Interim Recommendations



Accept Accreditation from TNI Accreditation Bodies and/or Utilize Onsite Evaluations Conducted through an Internationally Recognized Program

- Programmatic course corrections
- Reduced backlog – 200 to 40
  - Disconnected re-certifications to inspections
  - Prioritized inspections in consultation with USEPA
    - New applications
    - Risk-based criteria



# ERP Interim Recommendations



## Performance measures

- Application to Certification – 2 months
- Last 3 Months
  - Processed 93 applications – on target
  - 40 laboratories required audits
  - 10 new laboratory applications



# Future Plans

- ERP Implementation Plan
- Revise regulations
- Fees
- Training
  - Drinking Water Certification Officers
  - Succession training
- ELTAC
  - Review and implement recommendations
- Leader in the Nation





Questions?

