Transitioning California's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program

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National Environmental Monitoring Conference
August 9, 2017

Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Background

- 3rd consecutive special California session
  - We have accomplished a lot since last year

- Today I'll give you an update on what we've done
  - And talk about where we are going in the future

Accomplishments

- We are implementing a management system

- Created new units

- We have a plan to ensure relevant methods

- Increased communications with our stakeholders

- **We selected a laboratory standard (TNI!)**

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Selected TNI 2016

- We reached this point in collaboration with our agency clients and laboratory community

- Expect to incorporate standard by reference in regulation

- Expect adoption by our Board early 2018

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Transition is a Challenge

- There are 670 ELAP-accredited laboratories

- 10% implement TNI voluntarily

- The rest have never heard of TNI

- Resistance

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Goal of Presentation

- Tell you the steps we are taking to smooth the transition

- Identify things we'd like the larger TNI community's help with

Things we're doing

- Phased TNI implementation – 3 years
  – Mentoring Assessments

- Small Laboratory Workshops

- Early Implementation Project

Phased Implementation

- We've allowed up to 3 years from date of adoption of new regulations to implement

- We don't anticipate it will take this long

Mentoring Assessments

- 1 million dollar training contract for ELAP assessors
  - The contract does double duty and trains lab staff as well

- Laboratories will be assessed to the 2016 Standard
  - Findings are supplemental recommendations
  - Serve as their "roadmap" for implementing TNI

- Laboratories will also be able to ask questions of the expert assessor on-site

Small Laboratory Workshops

- Scalability
  - Now's the time to find out

- We will hold one day workshops
  - Goal is laboratories walk out with documentation they need to succeed

Early Implementation Project

- We'll select up to 6 laboratories to help us determine compliance assistance

- Consultants will work to achieve TNI
  – Based on info we derive from project

Things we need help with

- ***Third Party Assessments***

- Two changes made to the TNI standard

- Language clarifications

- Opportunity for justification case study

We need TPA Firms

- We're opening CA to third-party assessments
  - We don't have the expertise to assess highly complex methods
  - We're not even sure we can do it cost effectively for the lower complexity analyses

- We need TPAs to open offices in California

- There are at least 285 labs that will be required to use TPA
  - And there could be an additional 385 that may opt for TPA

How to become a CA TPA

- We're working on a Request for Qualifications to establish a pool of TPAs
  - Once released, qualified firms can apply

- CA will publish a list of firms for laboratories to choose from

- I would love your input on requested qualification

Things we need help with

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Technical Manager Education

- We'd like to see the requirements changed to recognize certifications
  - CA Water Environment Association

- Current requirements as written disqualify many experienced candidates
  - Education over experience is not always the correct choice

Proficiency Testing Frequency

- We'd like to see more flexibility in the required frequency
  - Allow 1
  - Or allow for an alternative

- Not sure CA will ever move to 2
  - At least under the current PT system

- But we would like to have the option of rejoining TNI down the road
  - And this could prevent us from having that option

Things we need help with

- Third Party Assessments

- Two changes made to the TNI standard

- Language clarifications

- ***<u>Opportunity for justification case study</u>***

Clarifications

- During our deliberations, CA laboratories identified confusion in TNI wording

  – We have agreed to provide a clarification document

- We would like to work with the TNI Community on the next version so a clarification document is not required

Things we need help with

- Third Party Assessments

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- Language clarifications

- ***Opportunity for justification case study***

Opportunity for Justification

- We had substantial resistance to adopting TNI
  - Many laboratories argued it does nothing to improve quality

- We'd like to show that our laboratories improved after implementation of TNI

- Lets work together to undertake data quality studies comparing before and after implementation of the standard

Better Together

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Questions