



**Directors**  
Manny Fernandez  
Tom Handley  
Pat Kite  
Anjali Lathi  
Jennifer Toy

**Officers**  
Paul R. Eldredge  
*General Manager/  
District Engineer*

Karen W. Murphy  
*Attorney*

September 16, 2016

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento CA 95814

Via E-mail to: [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov)

**Re: Comment Letter – ELAP Regulations Development/Laboratory Standards**

Dear Members of the State Water Resources Control Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed adoption of the 2016 NELAC Institute Standard, Volume I (TNI) for the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP).

Union Sanitary District is a California Special District (District) that provides for the collection, treatment, and disposal of Wastewater to a population of over 347,000 and over 3,000 Industrial/Commercial customers in the San Francisco Bay Area. The District operates a small ELAP certified utility laboratory that is dedicated to water quality analyses and providing timely results in a fiscally responsible manner.

The District would like to express our concerns regarding the proposed adoption of 2016 TNI standards for ELAP. The 2016 TNI Standard is based on an international standard ISO 17025 and defines a robust set of requirements for the certification for commercial laboratories engaging in interstate commerce. The proposed TNI framework is not appropriate for a small utility laboratory and the majority of laboratories certified under ELAP in California are small utility laboratories. Instead of adopting the 2016 TNI standard, the District would strongly encourage the State Board to reconsider the addition of any necessary elements to the existing ELAP standards (California Plus) that have served us well for years, or to provide a categorical exemption for small utility laboratories.

It is uncertain if the proposed 2016 TNI standards will improve water quality data. Instead, it is likely that a redirection of resources from other environmental activities would be necessary to implement and maintain compliance with the new standard requirements. While the cost of

Implementation and ongoing compliance is hard to estimate, The District is concerned that the cost will likely be substantial which may force many small utility laboratories to relinquish their certification under the ELAP program which may result in increasing the outsourcing of laboratory services.

The District and the public have benefitted from our internal laboratory having intimate familiarity with the samples processed. The internal processing of the samples provides beneficial knowledge of key characteristics, such as odor, color or viscosity of a sample, that are not quantified when using an outside laboratory services. This knowledge has been used to successfully identify the source of a non-compliant industrial discharge and led to prompt action need to correct the issue. In addition, our experience with the sample profiles have been beneficial in identifying likely non-representative results from outside laboratory analyses. Another significant benefit of a small laboratory is the timely availability of results and notification of all required staff. The timely results are a key tool for identifying and minimizing the impact of non-compliant industrial discharges into our treatment facility.

The District does not feel that a comment period of ten business days is sufficient to allow for the comprehensive review given the complexity of the standard and would like to request for your consideration, an extension to the comment period.

The adoption of the 2016 TNI standard is not in alignment with our goal of protecting the environment. The District sincerely recommends that the State Board reconsider the adoption of a California Plus standard in lieu of the 2016 TNI standard for the ELAP program. Should you have any questions or comments pertaining to this letter, please feel free to contact Armando Lopez, the Districts Treatment, and Disposal Manager at [armandol@unionsanitary.ca.gov](mailto:armandol@unionsanitary.ca.gov) or (510) 477-7517.

Sincerely,



Paul R. Eldredge, P.E.  
General Manager/District Engineer