



Media Release

State Water Board Adopts Regulations to Elevate Data Quality for CA Communities

All accredited labs will be required to meet a national standard

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SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board today adopted comprehensive regulations to modernize the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program ([ELAP](#)), which oversees more than 650 laboratories that regulate testing of drinking water, wastewater discharges and hazardous waste cleanup sites throughout California.

The new regulations require accredited laboratories to implement a nationally accepted standard, called the NELAC Institute (TNI) Standard, for managing all factors that potentially can affect the quality of lab results - from the quality of supplies and equipment to the training of laboratory staff.

“Laboratory data is the foundation of public health, environmental protection, and evidence-based, decision-making in our state,” said E. Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board. “Today’s adoption of national standards benefits all Californians by ensuring ELAP labs are meeting common core requirements and generating data of highest quality. Implementation of the standards will be appropriately flexible over the next three years, and the Board is committed to working with and ensuring all labs make the transition successfully.”

Laboratories previously were only required to meet the requirements in the analytical methods they perform, but the new standard requires facilities to control a broader scope of influential factors.

Approximately 150 of ELAP’s accredited laboratories were already implementing the TNI Standard prior to this regulatory proposal. The adoption of these regulations requires that every laboratory meets these minimum requirements to ensure consistent data quality for every community.

The [updated regulations](#) are the result of a panel review that found ELAP’s regulations seriously outdated and lacking some requirements that are considered minimum industry standards. The State Board called for the review after the program was moved to its jurisdiction in 2015.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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The regulatory update also improves ELAP's operations and administration and provides enhanced enforcement capabilities to respond to laboratory fraud or other chronic problems.

State Board staff is providing a suite of tools and training to assist laboratories transitioning to the national operating standard; they will have three years to implement the system before compliance is required.

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