The California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) Expert Review Panel: Year-One Review Summary



Punxsutawney Phil - Sees His Shadow

# A ROUND OF APPLAUSE



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Encouragement / Concerns
- Accomplishments
- ▶ Recommendations
- ► Future Directions
- Summary



#### ENCOURAGEMENT

- ► Staff are enthusiastic and driven to be the very best
- Client relationships have been established and have grown
- Stakeholder relationships flourishing with Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC) reconstituted
- Communication exists and has clearly improved

#### CONCERN

- Staff still needs extensive training to meet the program demands
- Client relationships created a new workload in the form of enforcement unit
- Stakeholder discussions have gotten bogged down in the weeds
- Communication needs to be strengthened and grown



# ESTABLISHING POOR CREDIBILITY

Credibility - The quality of being trusted and believed in

#### developing

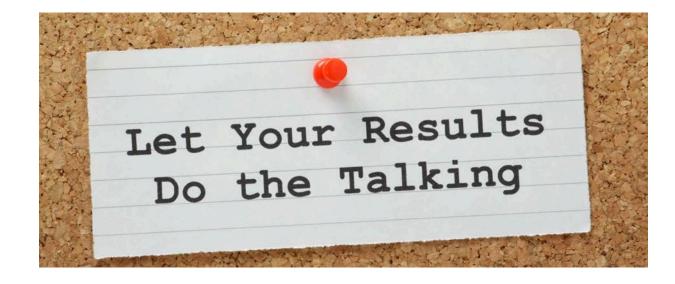
- ► California ELAP <del>lacks</del> credibility with:
  - ► Clients,
  - ► Laboratories, and
  - Other states

Eliminating the 'Gotcha' mentality



#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ Management System
- ▶ Enforcement Unit
- Proficiency Testing (PT) Unit



#### RECOMMENDATION AREAS

# STANDARD DECISION & RESOURCES

#### STANDARD DECISION

#### **DONE - 2016 TNI Standard**

- CONGRATULATIONS 58 Item List (Does not require Standard modification for everyone to get what they want!)
  - ▶ Majority of list requires 'clarification' not 'modification'
  - ► Implementation Process handles the rest
- Develop an Implementation Process

#### 2016 TNI STANDARD

- ► ELAP will have the framework for success and to accomplish the 'vision' for the program
- Stakeholders will have the resources to successfully make the transition to accreditation under a quality system
  - Access to user groups
  - ► Access to special training opportunities thru webinars
- Clarification process will benefit the entire laboratory community – beyond California



#### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- ▶ Timetable
  - ▶ Be aggressive
  - ▶ Be reasonable
- ► Training Resources
  - ► Laboratory needs
  - Assessor needs
  - ► Client needs



## RESOURCES

- ► Third Party
- Software
- ► Another Panel



#### THIRD PARTY

- Critical to eliminate backlog, especially for non-drinking water programs
- Critical to have the access to diversity of expertise needed to meet client needs
- Consequence of not using a third party is an increase in fees to hire more staff due to the new workload

#### SOFTWARE '

- Software is available that can significantly help with:
  - ▶ total management of the accreditation process; and
  - management of proficiency testing (PT) program
- Software will allow for better use of employee time



#### ANOTHER PANEL

- ► Hold yourselves accountable
- Direct and advise beyond program establishment









#### WALK BEFORE YOU RUN

- ► Focus resources on fundamentals of getting the program operational Don't be a lone ranger!
- ▶ Need to get program functioning to:
  - Establish sustainability for the program
  - Create a PT program or inter-laboratory network
  - Create a process for emerging contaminants
  - ► Consider being a TNI Accreditation Body



#### SUMMARY

- ► ELAP is not presently achieving its mission, but there is a path to get there
- Critical for the State to support ELAP's efforts and hold ELAP accountable
- Panel believes ELAP is:
  - ▶ Regaining credibility
  - Working toward an accreditation process the State and stakeholders support
  - Working to reliably ensure environmental and public health data used are of known and documented quality
  - Working on financial sustainability

#### NEXT STEPS

- ► Mid-March 2017: DRAFT Year-One Review Report
- ► End-of-March 2017: FINAL Year-One Review Report
- ▶ May 3, 2017: Presentation to the Water Board
- ► August 7 11, 2017: Session/Presentation at the Environmental Measurement Symposium

## QUESTIONS???

