

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 2:11 PM
To: Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRC; eregop@pahousegop.com; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; gvitali@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; apankake@pasen.gov
Cc: ra-epmsdevelopment@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: Environmental Laboratory Accreditation



Re: eComment System

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: Environmental Laboratory Accreditation.

Commenter Information:

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 IRRC
 2016 SEP -9 PM 3:55

Comments entered:

The proposed revisions in Section 252.301(h) (relating to Laboratory supervisor) are an improvement inasmuch as they allow an absence of 21 consecutive calendar days rather than 16. However, small labs may not have the luxury of having 'another staff member meeting the qualifications of a laboratory supervisor' available, especially when some of those qualifications are being increased (see changes to 252.302). In light of the proposed deletion of 'onsite' as a prefix to 'assessment' throughout Chapter 252 'to allow for the Department to explore cost-saving alternatives such as offsite assessments', 'absence' should be defined as 'offsite and not involved in or reviewing lab operations', rather than merely 'offsite'. The cost savings sought by the Department are also sought by the lab industry. Electronic remote access to lab data/operations is well developed and readily available, and offers a significant cost savings by allowing lab personnel to fulfill lab roles offsite.

The proposed revisions in Section 252.302(d)(2) (relating to Qualifications of the laboratory supervisor) unduly increase the educational requirements of prospective supervisors. The proposal to specify 'microbiology' rather than 'biology' is unnecessary for 'an environmental laboratory engaged in microbiological analysis limited to fecal coliform, total coliform, E. coli and heterotrophic bacteria', especially in light of current technologies, such as IDEXX Colilert, that do not require advanced technical knowledge that might be gained through a microbiology college course. It has been expressed by the Department that there is concern about diminishing lab industry capacity. That capacity is threatened by the increasing supervisor qualification demands of the Department.

The assessment of labs is sometimes conducted by Department personnel lacking the qualifications of a laboratory supervisor for the given testing specialties they are assessing.

Laboratory assessment by unqualified assessors does not allow the Department to adequately evaluate laboratory performance.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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