

Committee Request for Board Action: None

47 attendees participated remotely, including representatives from 25 BACWA member agencies and the Regional Water Board.

Automation of Total Phosphorus Analysis at EBMUD

Emily Volkmar (EBMUD) described how her lab improved efficiency for Total Phosphorus analysis by implementing autoclave digestion and discrete analysis using method SM 4500-P F-2011. EBMUD recently purchased the SEAL AQ400 discrete analyzer to support their biological nutrient removal pilot project. They also switched from hot plate digestion to autoclave digestion for total phosphorus. Overall, the new method provides faster results, requires less staff time, and reduces repetitive stress injuries for laboratory staff. The automated method for total phosphorus is accredited separately, and EBMUD went through the accreditation process in 2024 by completing an MDL study, proficiency testing, an onsite assessment, and related tasks. The discrete analyzer is also useful for analyzing process control samples for ammonia, nitrate, and nitrite, which has been useful as EBMUD completes pilot testing of biological nutrient removal at the plant. [Link to Slides.](#)

Flow Injection Analysis of Nutrients at San José – Santa Clara

Buddhima Mahanama, Helio Regalado, and Alex Chieh (San José – Santa Clara RWF) presented on their lab's use of a Flow Injection Analyzer ([FIAlyzer-1000 Series](#)) for nutrient analysis. The method uses gas diffusion across a membrane followed by fluorescence detection, and does not require a distillation step. Using this method, the analysis time for ammonia samples has been cut in half. San José lab recently obtained accreditation for the EPA method (FIALab 100) for analysis of ammonia and TKN by conducting an MDL study, performing an initial demonstration of capability, completing proficiency testing, and then setting up an audit. San José is an early adopter of this method, which EPA and California ELAP have rolled out as part of the 2021 [Methods Update Rule](#). [Link to Slides.](#)

Agency Reports and Announcements

- **Training.** San José shared information about an in-person, hands-on training opportunity for activated sludge microscopy, to be led by [Ryan Hennessy](#). Interested labs should contact [Payal](#).
- **Audits.** Vacaville shared information about a surprise ELAP audit that their lab received in July 2025, which focused on drinking water methods using Colilert.
- **Staffing.** Union Sanitary District shared the results of an informal staffing survey; 11 out of 12 labs that they contacted were using an alternative schedule (e.g., 9/80, 10-hour shifts, etc.).
- **TNI.** One of the topics at this year's [NEMS](#) conference was new TNI standards to be released in 2026. The changes being proposed could eventually allow CA ELAP to be fully TNI-compliant rather than using a modified version of the TNI standard.
- **Tariffs.** Committee members discussed the effects of tariffs, which are being treated as a separate line item by some vendors (but not all).

BACWA Announcements

- **Nutrient Watershed Permit.** The [PET Tool](#) for uploading data to CIWQS has been updated. Members should use the "Seasonal Average" data type to report 5-month average dry season Total Inorganic Nitrogen load in their annual self-monitoring reports.
- **Chronic Toxicity.** A recent [court opinion](#) on the Test of Significant Toxicity could result in changes to whole effluent toxicity testing requirements. For now, dischargers should continue monitoring as required by their individual NPDES permits.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 14, 10 AM, Virtual