

Testimony
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Panel #1

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In order to put some context into Mr. Freeman's upcoming remarks, I would like to take just a moment or two to briefly outline our interim laboratory accreditation program.

The EAC launched an interim accreditation program in December of 2005. This action was taken because the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) informed the EAC that the expected timeline to complete required document collection and review, pre-assessment and formal on-site assessments of applicants under their NVLAP program made it highly unlikely that it would be able to provide a list of recommended laboratories before the end of 2006. This determination made it clear that the EAC would need to have an alternative process in place to provide accredited laboratories if it wished to implement its certification program before that time.

Although (Section 231(a)(1)) of HAVA provides that laboratories are generally to be accredited in a two step process using NIST, HAVA provides a mechanism for EAC to accredit laboratories absent a recommendation by NIST in Section 231(b)(2)(B). This section requires that EAC publish an explanation when accrediting a laboratory without a NIST recommendation.

EAC's interim program followed international standards used by laboratory accreditation bodies all over the world, including NIST in its National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP). The accreditation process requires laboratories to bring their resources, personnel and procedures into compliance before an accreditation is granted. Under EAC's interim program two laboratories, SysTest Labs and Wyle Inc., received interim accreditation. One laboratory, Ciber Inc., continues to work with EAC's laboratory assessor to bring its procedures in line with accepted standards.