

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
December 1, 2011

1. Call to order

Judy Duncan called the meeting to order at 12 Noon CST on December 1, 2011. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1. Jack Farrell also joined the call.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the November 3, 2011, meeting were reviewed and approved for posting on the TNI website.

3. New members

At the last meeting, members agreed to extend an invitation to Martina McGarvey to join the committee. Martina accepted and was present on the call. It was recommended that JoAnn Boyd be moved to regular member, but it was determined that JoAnn currently is a member of FAC, LASEC and Policy. The committee agreed that JoAnn should be maintained as an associate member representing Field Activities until her term expires on one of the other committees. Jerry will continue to pursue committee membership with Janice Willey.

4. Review of AB database by state assessor group

Jerry presented the state accreditation body database to the state assessors' forum meeting. As a result, he received suggestions for several changes and corrections.

Jerry also reported that he had received an inquiry from W. Virginia stating that they were re-considering their participation in the NELAP program. Jerry will develop an outreach package to send to W. Virginia. He will then check the TNI database to identify other states that participated at one time but have dropped out. He will send the information package to them as well. It was also suggested that we develop a powerpoint and possibly a webinar for non-NELAP states.

5. Status of draft policy on use of TNI presentations

Jerry indicated that he had not had time to work on this. Carol offered to assist if needed. This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. SLAG update

Keith reported that SLAG had a call right after this call and they would be discussing the Small Lab Handbook.

7. Articles for WEF Lab Solutions

The committee discussed potential articles and updates to submit to WEF Lab Solutions. The following were agreed upon:

January: Small Lab Handbook – Carol will look at TNI newsletter article and use as a starting point working with Keith.

March: Elizabeth will collaborate with Nan Thomey on an article “The benefits of a quality system”

May: Changes in the PT program – Eric Smith

July: TNI training opportunities – Jerry and Ilona

We should consider doing some of the articles on a recurring basis.

Jerry reported that he had two requests wanting to know if it was OK to share the TNI newsletter. He responded that it was OK to share. He also suggested and the committee agreed that the newsletter should be sent to members of the state assessors group.

8. Next APHL meeting

Ken Jackson reported that the deadline had passed to submit an abstract for the next APHL meeting, but there was still time for TNI to submit for a poster presentation. The other option would be to have a one-pager at our exhibit booth explaining who TNI is and the benefits of having state labs accredited. The consensus was that Ken should do both a poster and have the one page summary.

9. ELAB request for input

Jack Farrell joined the call as an invited guest and as TNI’s representation on the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB). Jack explained the ELAB had started an initiative about 6 months ago examining the health of national environmental laboratory accreditation. They are trying to get comments from a range of stakeholders about current strengths, challenges and remedies in the program. ELAB wants to be able to advise EPA on the status of national accreditation. He had previously sent out a matrix developed by ELAB to help generate discussion and solicit comments. Jack received the comments below from the Advocacy Committee on the topic areas indicated:

How successful is national accreditation so far?

- Can look at it in a global or micro fashion. Globally, it is successful because we have a standard that the majority of the state programs use in some manner, and we have a good process for how the standard is adapted to meet needs. However, we are not where we should be in terms of implementation.
- Accreditation should be mandatory in all programs, not just drinking water.
- EPA will probably not request a law making accreditation mandatory, but they do have a policy requiring accreditation for contract work. Maybe EPA needs to have a policy saying they value accreditation.
- Currently, there is no incentive or reward for labs that are NELAP accredited. EPA should have a policy that encourages states to rely on accredited labs for regulatory data. EPA should bring together stakeholders to see what could be done to establish a robust policy on national accreditation.

TNI standard:

- As long as the DW program only requires 1 PT, there is no incentive for DW labs to get NELAP accreditation. The PT frequency is an impediment.

On-site assessment:

- Frequency of onsite assessments also differs from DW certification and is an impediment to labs and state programs.

Acceptance of a national program:

- There are regulatory and statutory issues with state governments.
- Wastewater labs need to be required to be accredited, too.
- Some state labs reluctant to be accredited by other state programs. State autonomy issues. This may be perceived rather than real.

Training:

- Need more training. EPA should assist and promote assessor training.
- DW certification training should be more widely available.
- Training needed on how to do assessments, basic tools and skills that assessors need.
- EPA should take a stronger role in assisting state primacy labs in becoming accredited. This could be linked to the national accreditation policy.
- No all assessors are aware of TNI training.
- Should consider analyst credentialing and assessor credentialing, to include upfront training and continuing education.

Jack indicated that any other input could be emailed to him. He is trying to get this all together by Dec. 5. The next ELAB meeting is Dec. 21 at 1:00 pm. Participation is open to anyone. Participants can get the call in information from Lara Autry.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Advocacy Committee will be January 5, 2011. The agenda will include planning for the Sarasota meeting.

Attachment 1

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Present/Absent
1.	Lara Autry	EPA (Other)	Present
2.	Lynn Bradley	Other	Present
3.	Judy Duncan	Other	Present
4.	Kenneth Jackson	Other	Absent
5.	Martina McGarvey	AB	Present
6.	Susan Wyatt	AB	Absent
7.	Zonetta English	Lab	Present
8.	Paula Hogg	Lab	Present
9.	Elizabeth Turner	Lab	Present
10.	Gary Ward	AB	Present
11.	Michael Wichman	Lab	Absent
12.	Keith Chapman	Small Lab Advocate	Present
	Associate Members		
	Kirstin McCracken	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Present
	Steve Arms	AB	Present
	Aurora Shields	Lab	Absent
	JoAnn Boyd	Lab and FAC	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Present