

**SUMMARY OF THE
TNI STATE PRIMACY LABORATORY ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE
MEETING**

MAY 13, 2011

The Task Force held its first conference call on Friday, May 13, 2011, at 2:00 pm EST.

Chris Armstrong, OK DEQ	Present
Kristin Brown, UT DOH	Present
Art Clark, EPA Region 1	Present
Ken Jackson, TNI	Present
Megan Latshaw, APHL	Present
Martina McGarvey, PA DEP	Present
Michelle Wade, KS DHE	Absent
Kathryn Wangsness, AZ DHS	Present
Michael Wichman, State Hygienic lab at UI	Present

1 – Introductions

The Task Force members introduced themselves and then Ken gave a brief description of the background and purpose of the task Force. Many state primacy environmental laboratories are accredited to the EPA Office of Water standards, and a few are accredited by NELAP. Ken stressed that the TNI standard, in common with those of A2LA and AIHA is based on the international standard ISO 17025. However, the TNI standard development program is the only one that meets the EPA requirement of being a consensus standards development program, and it is accredited as such by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The TNI standard, encompassing all applicable requirements of ISO 17025, has much more rigorous quality control and quality assurance requirements than the EPA Office of Water standard. TNI believes all laboratories should be NELAP accredited to the TNI standard. The purpose of this Task Force is to investigate ways to address barriers for state primacy laboratories to seek NELAP accreditation.

2 – Overview of the APHL SELA Subcommittee work

Kathryn, Michael and Megan explained that the APHL Environmental Health Committee is the parent of the State Environmental Laboratory (SELA) subcommittee. They want to encourage expanding accreditation beyond drinking water to all matrices/programs, and an objective of SELA is a requirement that all compliance monitoring data submitted to EPA comes from accredited laboratories. Thus, they would like to see all local laboratories, as well as primacy laboratories, be accredited. SELA wants to find out what states would see as the ideal system, rather than concentrating on what is wrong with the current system. They want to get EPA to push the need for a laboratory quality system for all matrices/programs, and help people understand the new EPA Forum on Environmental Measurements (FEM) policy. SELA is working with ECOS and hoping

to work with other entities that support or use laboratory testing and supports the state assessor forum. It was questioned how supportive the EPA regions are on accreditation. Art replied there is a mandate for all regional laboratories to be accredited, and some went for NELAP accreditation, while others looked elsewhere. The states will do what EPA requires, and APHL is pushing for the EPA Office of Water to standardize data requirements and is suggesting that encouraging the adoption of the ERLN Type 2 data standard may be a good baseline for all federal and state agencies collecting environmental data.

3 – Discussion of TNI Priorities

There was general agreement that the first bullet (developing an acceptable approach for accreditation of primacy laboratories in the TNI system) is key and similar to SELA's goals and should be addressed first. Time permitted just a brief preliminary discussion of this. During the discussion some ideas were brought up, such as the suggestion for several states and an EPA region to join together to inspect the labs, but it is not known how many regions would buy into this. The regions have a resource issue with NELAP. Initially, there was a high level of participation (e.g., as assessors reviewing state accreditation bodies), but the regions do not have the money to continue at this level. Many state primacy laboratories are also resistant to NELAP accreditation because of the high fees imposed by NELAP state accreditation bodies. The use of third party assessors also involves high fees. There was also discussion regarding state concerns about having another state inspecting their laboratory. It was agreed that there is no "magic bullet" for this issue, but that it will take different strategies to move forward.

This discussion was curtailed, since time ran out.

4 - Any Additional Priorities

None were added at this time.

5 – Plan of Action

Ken asked all Task Force members to come to the next call prepared to brainstorm approaches for accreditation of primacy laboratories, stressing that we should be prepared to think "outside the box".

6 – APHL Annual Meeting in June

Ken announced he will be at the Omaha meeting, as exhibitor for TNI, and he would like to meet with any members of the Task Force who will also be there. There was insufficient time to schedule any meetings, so Ken will contact the Task Force members by e-mail before the conference.

7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm. Ken will contact members to schedule the next conference call.

AGENDA
STATE PRIMACY LABORATORY ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE
May 13, 2011, 2:00 – 3:30 pm EDT
1-219-509-8222; access code 8629608#

1. Introductions
2. Overview of the APHL SELA Subcommittee
3. Discussion of TNI priorities:
 - developing an acceptable approach for accreditation of primacy laboratories in the TNI system;
 - designing a system to help EPA assure the quality of state primacy labs and assure EPA's Office of Water that all primacy laboratories are meeting the drinking water program requirements;
 - creating specifications for accreditation of primacy labs and/or assistance to those seeking accreditation;
 - providing training for laboratory staff on how to manage their NELAP accreditation.
4. Any additional priorities
5. Plan of action