

# TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary

## October 14, 2015

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### 1. Roll Call

Directors	Present
Jordan Adelson	
Aaren Alger	X
Steve Arms	
Justin Brown	X
Scot Cocanour	X
George Detsis	X
Zonetta English	X
Jack Farrell	X
Keith Greenaway	X
Myron Gunsalus	
Sharon Mertens	X
Judy Morgan	
Lara Phelps	
Patsy Root	
Scott Siders	X
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	
Elizabeth Turner	X
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batterton	X
Ken Jackson	X
Jerry Parr	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Janice Wlodarski	X

### 2. Approval of September 9, 2015 Minutes

**Motion to Approve:** Elizabeth Turner  
**Second:** George Detsis  
**Approved:** Unanimous

### 3. Resignation of Scott Siders

Scott Siders has retired from Illinois EPA and has taken a new job with PDC Laboratories. In accordance with standard practice, Scott has offered his resignation. Prior to the resignation, the Board had 5 AB, 7 Lab and 3 Other. If the Board accepts this resignation, the balance will be 4 AB, 7 Lab and 3 Other, with no group in dominance. If the Board rejects the resignation, the Board will be unbalanced with 4 AB, 8 Lab and 3 Other.

Sharon suggests that we accept Scott's resignation at this time, and Scott is encouraged to put in his application for nomination for BOD representing the laboratory sector starting next year.

**Motion to Accept Scott Siders' Resignation:** Jack Farrell  
**Second:** Scott Cocanour  
**Approved:** Unanimous

#### 4. Resolution of Complaint 23

Alfredo appointed Steve Arms and Maria Friedman to join Silky Labie as the assigned team to investigate this complaint. The team met twice and Silky (as team leader) provided the recommendations to the Policy Committee.

The substance of the complaint, about the Non-governmental Accreditation Body (NGAB) recognition program and processes associated with that, is that the NGAB is a “core program” but not authorized by the TNI Bylaws, that the workgroup chartered to establish the program has completed its work and should be disbanded, and that the entire NGAB program should be halted until the issues are resolved and as a corollary issue, the ILAC recognitions of NGABs be acknowledged as acceptable to TNI.

In summary, the team’s investigation established that NGAB is definitely not a core program for TNI, and recommends the following responses to the remedies sought by the complaint:

1. The workgroup’s function is done so that it can be disbanded,
2. The TNI NGAB Recognition Committee (TNRC, which is presently chartered as reporting to the Board) does need a “home” in the TNI structure and that this is logically within the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP), and
3. Within NELAP, the TNRC should be associated with the Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee (LASEC) in relationship similar to that between the NELAP Accreditation Council and the TNI Board of Directors.

The Policy Committee discussed these recommendations at length, and while all agreed they are sensible and reasonable, participants recognize that to place the NGAB program within NELAP now, at the outset, would be tremendously detrimental to NELAP. Because several states believe their statutes or regulations will only permit their accreditation programs to interact with other governmental accreditation/certification programs, introducing non-governmental programs into NELAP would likely result in those several states withdrawing from NELAP in short order. Even a “dotted line” relationship between the NGAB and LASEC, similar to that between the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) and the TNI Board of Directors, would create tremendous unease and anxiety within NELAP with potentially severe negative consequences. As a separate (but not core) program, as it stands now, all of the NELAP ABs are satisfied that the AC’s mutual recognition agreement is not threatened.

Also, there are a few minor activities for which the workgroup’s efforts are needed, in order to complete the documentation of processes for recognizing NGABs as accrediting environmental labs to the TNI Standard. A minor tweak of the workgroup’s charter to permit these few activities to be completed, and to set a firm date for dissolving the workgroup would work satisfactorily.

The TNI General Complaint Resolution Process SOP 1-106 Rev 0.1 Section 9.6.2 directs that the team’s recommendations should be forwarded to the Board, since more than one program or committee is involved. Mei Beth moved, and Eric seconded, that the team’s recommendations be sent to the Board of Directors with a cover letter describing the Policy Committee’s discussions and complimenting the team’s recommendations. With no formal discussion, approval of this motion was unanimous. Alfredo will create the cover memo and send it with the recommendations, in time for the October 14 Board meeting. Alfredo also declared that the investigative team can be disbanded, and thanked Silky, on the team’s behalf.

**Motion to Accept the Recommendations of the Policy Committee:** Jack Farrell  
**Second:** Judy Morgan  
**Approved:** Unanimous

## 5. California (Attachment 1)

The California Expert Panel is presenting their report publically on October 14 and will meet in Private on October 15. Based on a review of negative comments being sent in, TNI prepared a brief statement of support.

## 6. Draft Letter to FEM

We have planned to send this letter to FEM every 2 years to update them on our accomplishments and current status and information about our programs. The last summary was submitted several years ago. This year's letter was heavily vetted through the Advocacy Committee and needs to be submitted in the next day or so to be included in the FEM meeting later this month.

After discussion, there is additional valuable information that should be included in this report. This will just delay the report until the next quarterly meeting early 2016 (February). We will check with Lara to see if FEM is expecting this information for the October meeting, or if it will be okay to hold it until the next quarterly meeting.

## 7. \$12.7 Million Grants Competition Posted for Providing Training and Technical Assistance to Small Public Water Systems

On September 10, EPA announced the availability of up to \$12,678,000 on a competitive basis for the purpose of providing training and technical assistance to improve water quality and enable small public water systems to provide safe drinking water. After discussing this with a few individuals, we think TNI might be able to get a small award (i.e., \$500K) focused on these two areas:

- Compliance with Parts 136 and 141
- Improving good laboratory practices (i.e., the "Handbook" we are working on).

The application is due October 26, but it should be possible to put together a proposal within that time. The grant package can be reviewed at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/sdwa/smallsystemsrfc.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/sdwa/smallsystemsrfc.cfm).

The following is the expected total of awards:

- One to three awards are anticipated under the *Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA* National Priority Area, with an estimated total of \$8 million;
- One to two awards are anticipated under the *Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Financial and Managerial Capacity and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water* National Priority Area, with an estimated total of \$1.8 million;
- One to two awards are anticipated under the *Training and Technical Assistance for Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems to Help Improve Water Quality* National Priority Area, with an estimated total \$1,178,000; and
- One to two awards are anticipated under the *Training and Technical Assistance for Private Well Owners to Help Improve Water Quality* National Priority Area, with a total of \$1.7 million.

**Motion to Move Forward with a Grant Proposal:** Elizabeth Turner  
**Second:** Jack Farrell  
**Approved:** Unanimous

**8. Program Reports (Attachment 2)**

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## **Attachment 1 TNI/California ELAP Statement of Support**

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TNI supports the recommendations of the expert review panel of California ELAP, not only because they are well-considered, sound, and practical, but also, because they are in harmony with TNI's mission. By re-applying to NELAP, the California ELAP would validate all efforts it undertakes to improve its accreditation program by an independent, external group of national stature consisting of extremely qualified peers.

In re-joining NELAP, the California ELAP would have the benefit of participating in the NELAP Accreditation Council and partake of the expertise and best practices knowledge of 15 other ABs. As a NELAP AB, the California ELAP would be in a privileged position to keep pace with the trends and changes affecting the environmental laboratory community and to shape and refine the future of laboratory accreditation beyond its state borders.

If the California ELAP became a NELAP AB, in-state laboratories would benefit from the opportunity to obtain reciprocal accreditation from all NELAP-recognized ABs. By adopting the TNI Standard, the California ELAP could focus its resources to improving and maintaining excellence in its accreditation program, instead of diverting efforts to create a redundant, inefficient, and insular accreditation standard.

### **Resources and Support for Laboratory Accreditation from TNI**

The NELAC Institute (TNI) is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community. TNI operates a number of programs to support this mission, including the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). To support this program, TNI provides resources for both laboratories and the organizations that accredit laboratories.

This document was prepared to summarize some of the resources available from TNI.

### **Tools for Accreditation Bodies including California**

TNI has developed and maintains a number of resources in helping Accreditation Bodies (ABs) implement their program. These include:

- A database of over 3000 analytes and an easy system for adding new analytes,
- A database of over 4000 methods and a Methods Compendium that allows access to a copy of the method,
- A Laboratory Accreditation Management System that allows ABs to upload information about their accredited laboratories and also allow the general public access to search for laboratories,
- An annual Assessment Forum, where laboratory assessors can share information,
- Training courses on ISO 17011 and the TNI standard for ABs,
- Fields of Proficiency Testing (PT), tables of analytes required for proficiency testing with concentration ranges and acceptance limits,
- A listing of PT Providers accredited to the TNI standard for PT providers, and
- A listing of third-party contract laboratory assessors.

## **Tools for California Laboratories**

TNI has also developed and maintains a number of resources in helping laboratories become accredited. These include:

- A Small Laboratory Handbook, a document that explains the TNI standard in plain English,
- A Quality Manual Template, a document that allows a laboratory to easily develop their own Quality Manual,
- A listing of consultants that assist laboratories in becoming accredited,
- An annual Mentor Session where information to help laboratories is shared,
- A Small Laboratory Advocacy Group, where laboratories can share information and ask questions, and
- A series of downloadable webcasts (see the text box below) to help train laboratories on specific aspects of the TNI standard.

### **Webcasts Available from TNI**

- Corrective Action Process and Root Cause Analysis
- Records and Record Keeping
- Theoretical and Practical Consideration for Establishing Sensitivity of Measurements
- Internal Audits and Management Review
- Ethics Training for the Environmental Professional
- Establishing a Data Integrity Plan
- Defining Organizational Responsibilities
- Method Selection and Validation
- Developing the Quality Manual as a Useful Management Tool
- Document and Document Control
- Implementing the 2009 TNI Standard

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## Attachment 2 PROGRAM REPORTS

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### CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The Chemistry Committee's Final Standard on Calibration (V1M4, Sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2) has been published on the website. The Committee has posted an Interim Standard on Detection and Quantitation (V1M4, Section 1.5.1 and 1.5.2) for voting through November 10. Finalization of this standard will complete the committee's work on the 2015 standard, and it is now discussing areas of future standards development.
- The Proficiency Testing Committee continues to consider the comments received on its Voting Draft Standards for Volumes 3 and 4.
- The Quality Systems Committee has posted its intent to add the definition of "Lot" to V1M2. This will bring consistency with its definition in the Proficiency Testing Volume 3 Voting Draft Standard; i.e., "a definite amount of a material produced during a single manufacturing cycle and intended to have uniform character and quality (per ISO/IEC 9001:2000)". The committee is also posting a Voting Draft Standard on V1M2 Section 5.5.13.1 (Support Equipment) to make it clear that thermometer calibrations do not require bracketing. This will make the section consistent with language that has been approved in V1M5 (microbiology).
- The Stationary Source Audit Sample Committee has submitted data to EPA, supporting its request for the voluntary test for mercury on filters to become mandatory. Also, a subcommittee is collecting laboratory data to investigate whether different technologies are contributing to high failure rates for Method 8 (sulfuric acid).
- The Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee members have received the website for the completed generic application software from the IT Committee, per the Database Development Plan, and this will be further discussed at the October committee meeting, so that beta-testing and working with the various ABs to determine the format for each state's application can begin. They are also reviewing a preliminary draft for a revision of Volume 2 of the standard to combine Modules 1 and 3, in preparation for undertaking formal revision next calendar year.
- The Whole Effluent Toxicity Committee continues to work diligently to establish its goals and priorities for activities. The enthusiastic members are eager to work towards improved standardization of PT testing, improving assessor capabilities, and upgrading the standard module by means of SIRs until they can undertake a full revision of V1M7 for the next cycle.
- The Radiochemistry committee has a FINAL Standard. All final documents are being reviewed and will be posted into Dropbox this next month. The committee has started discussing tools to help with the implementation of the new standard. The committee will plan to do a training at the Winter Forum and a subcommittee has been formed to work on the Small Lab Handbook.
- The committee The Microbiology Committee plans to post the Interim Standard in the next two weeks. The SRC is reviewing the final document the committee wants to post. The committee began work on the Small Lab Handbook.
- The Quality Systems Committee has circled back to a number of SIRs that have not been completed. Revised language will be sent to the LASEC by the end of the month. The committee is continuing work on the Handbook using WebEx to make drafting language easier. Assignments for preparation of specific sections have been made. The committee is making updates to the Standard to deal with support equipment calibration checks and defining "lot". The updates have been sent to the SRC for final review before the changes are posted as a VDS for vote and comment.

## **NEFAP Executive Committee**

- The committee still needs updates to be made by William to the web pages.
- The committee Charter has been completed and is being forwarded to the Board of Directors.
- Articles were submitted by Kim and Paul for the TNI newsletter.
- The strategic planning/marketing subcommittee has started meeting. Marlene Moore has volunteered to Chair this subcommittee and their next meeting will be late October/early November. The committee has made progress and has started to develop a list of priorities.
- Follow-up is being done with A2LA regarding the accreditation of Stack Testers.
- Marlene Moore prepared a short Webcast to let people know about TNI's various programs including NEFAP. Ilona and Marlene worked on some updates that needed to be made to this and Ilona will get it out to William for posting this week.

## **Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)**

- Three FSMO tools were sent to William for posting on the NEFAP EC website, but they have not yet been posted.
- The Container Subcommittee: One container manufacturer has expressed interest in working with this subcommittee. Kevin and Justin will be pulling information together and planning a first meeting. No progress was made on this in September.
- John Moorman is putting together a workshop for FSEA. It will be a forum with NEFAP ABs to discuss why accreditation is needed – even though it is not required. There will also be speakers from the FSMO perspective. Information and previous presentations were shared. NEFAP brochures were sent to go into attendee packets for the conference.
- The committee is continuing to work on the Scope Guidance document. The committee will begin work on this again in November.
- The committee is still looking for a Vice-Chair.
- Progress has been made on ANSI approval. Ken sent off the information the committee prepared and ANSI has posted it on their website.

## **NELAP**

### **Accreditation Council**

- Seven evaluations are complete with renewals approved. Kansas received a provisional renewal, based on its well-crafted plan (begun before renewal) that includes having lab staff cross-trained as assessors and catching up on overdue assessments by May 31, 2016, with evaluation team verification of completion for this corrective action at that time. An additional six are in various stages of the process, with two site visits not yet scheduled, but three of the site reports are completed and two of the others have been reviewed as drafts, with the remaining one expected to be completed by time of this meeting.
- One remaining evaluation will begin later this year and we anticipate an application from Oklahoma before the end of the year, as well. The Council continues discussing and considering changes to the evaluation process for the next cycle (beginning in December 2016.)

- The Council is also finalizing its Mutual Recognition Policy 3-100 for resubmission to Policy Committee after preliminary review earlier this year.

### **Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LAS EC)**

- LASEC members have approved a recommendation to the NELAP AC for the Calibration Standard (Section 1.7.1 and 1.7.2 of V1M4), contingent upon development of the agreed-upon guidance for laboratories about using the “Relative Standard Error” calculations. This will be transmitted to the NELAP AC soon. Recommendations for the PT Standards and the Radiochemistry Standard are pending final versions of those documents.
- Planning for the Assessment Forum and Mentor Session at the winter meeting in Tulsa is underway, with a focus on topics that will be useful to OK labs as they prepare for their initial NELAP assessments.
- LASEC is reviewing an expanded draft policy for how methods are to be selected and assessed during reassessment site visits and will shortly take up the promised “prep method” policy. Once final, these two policies will be forwarded to the AC for its consideration.
- Four new SIRs received final approval and have been sent for posting to the TNI web site. One SIR (a holdover from the backlog) has been reevaluated and determined not to be resolvable as a SIR since it would require the addition of definition language to the standard, which is inappropriate based on both policy and precedent by LASEC.

### **PROFICIENCY TESTING**

- The committee has now received approval from the NELAP AC to work on the addition of analytes to the FoPT tables (Analyte Addition Requests):
  - (Carl Kircher – FL) SCM FoPT Table: Arochlor 1221, Arochlor 1232 and Arochlor 1248 to PCBs in Oil. The request has been sent to the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.
  - (Jeff Lowry) SCM FoPT Table: DBCP, EDB and 1,2,3-Trichloropropane. The request has been sent to the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.
  - (Jennifer Best - EPA) DW FoPT Table: Subdivision of current codes to: MPN – Multiple Tube and MPN – Multiple Well. The code for MPN encompasses different methods that have different sample volumes analyzed – therefore different reported values. This is a PT problem. The request is being sent to the Microbiology FoPT Subcommittee. The Chair of this subcommittee is on leave until November, so this will be distributed at that time.
- Still in progress: The committee has started work on two old SIRs that were returned by the LASEC due to controversy over the response. They center around asking labs to run PTs for methods that they were not designed for. Usually a concentration issue. This was tabled for a number of months. Maria plans to begin addressing this in the upcoming months at the committee begins looking at how data is collected for the FoPT tables.
- The SOP Subcommittee has started meeting again. One of their priorities will be updating the PTPA Evaluation SOP.
- The NPW and SCM tables were updated for the naming of 2,2'-oxybis (1-chloropropane). The effective dates will be April 1, 2016.
- The committee approved the changes to the PTPEC website so that ARA requests can be accepted online. Additional summary information about the process has been added.

- The WETT FoPT Subcommittee has approached Brian with DMR to find out if the instructions in question could be added to the DMR instructions. Maria has followed up with Brian and is hoping the changes requested can be made by next December. The PTPEC has deleted Footnote 3 and the WETT FoPT Table will be sent to the NELAP AC for approval. The committee is hoping that Brian will add the information from Footnote 3 into the DMR QA instructions.
- The FoPT Table Format Subcommittee has been asked by the NELAP AC not to add methods to the FoPT tables as initially requested. They have been asked to add CAS numbers. This change in focus will need to be updated in the subcommittee's scope and then the subcommittee will begin meeting again in November.
- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is continuing the review of SCM data.
- The committee will complete its Charter update in October/November.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Advocacy Committee**

- The next newsletter is on track to be published this month.
- The Advocacy Committee is continuing discussion about sponsoring an event for young professionals (and new attendees) at the Tulsa meeting.
- The TNI ambassadors to non-NELAP states are in the process of reaching out to their state contacts to discuss state issues and TNI resources.

### **Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies**

- The webcast has been sent to William for clean-up. He will be providing links to Ilona and Carol to give to people that need to finish the training or to people that want to gain the training to be an NGAB Evaluator.
- Completeness Checklists are just about done. There are only a few minor things still needed from the applicants.
- Onsite evaluations are expected to be complete before the Tulsa meeting. Observations should be complete by February 2016.

### **NEMC**

- The Abstract submission process is now open on the NEMC website.
- The Steering Committee is pulling together pictures to update the website and program information.
- The NEMC Facebook Group page is operational (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NEMCmail/> ). The LinkedIn site (<https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=8287434>) is also operational.
- NEMC Twitter is also now operational.

### **Policy Committee**

- Policy Committee is presently focusing its review activities on the draft TNI Quality Management Plan and the associated internal audits. Current plans are that the internal audit process will be thoroughly described as consisting of self-audits, internal audits (by TNI staff or volunteers not associated with the particular program) and external audits such as ANSI and the financial audits, all planned around a 5-year schedule. Checklists for the various committees and functions within TNI will be prepared as appropriate, before the QMP can be considered ready for implementation.
- The investigation team has completed its work on Complaint #23 and Policy Committee is presenting those recommendations to the Board at the October meeting.

### **Training**

- The updates to the Ethics and Data Integrity webcast have been sent to William.
- NGAB Evaluator training information has been sent to William for posting before the 15<sup>th</sup> of October.
- Jerry did a webinar: EPA Regulations and Testing Requirements. It was well attended with about 140 registrations and about 200 in attendance. Groups only register once.

### **Membership Report**

- There were 4 new committee applications that have been forwarded to committee chairs and program administrators.
- **Active Members:** 945