

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
January 13, 2009

1. Call to order

Judy Duncan called the meeting to order at 1:30 EST at the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in Miami. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of minutes

Approval of minutes from the 12-4-08 meeting will be postponed until the February meeting.

3. Report from EPA on contractor requirements

Kevin Kubik, EPA Region 2, reported on Region 2's initiative to incorporate requirements for NELAP accreditation for labs used in Superfund projects into contracts. Region 2 contacted contract managers and project managers and asked them to add the following language into existing contracts, IAs and RP Consent Agreements:

“It is required that any environmental laboratory utilized by the Respondent shall be currently certified or accredited for the matrix and analysis which are to be conducted for any work performed pursuant to this Order, by one of the following accreditation/certification programs: National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP), American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (AALA), a certification issued by a program conducted, or approved, by a State and acceptable to USEPA, or the contracted laboratory is participating in the USEPA Contract Laboratory Program.”

Lara Autry stated that she intended to work with the Forum on Environmental Monitoring (FEM) to get this language and approach used across the agency. Kevin indicated that his next goal is to expand this language to other programs in Region 2.

4. Meeting with Greg Carroll EPA Office of Water

Jerry Parr provided a summary of the meeting that several board members and others had with Greg Carroll, EPA OW. The meeting included discussion of the role of TNI and the EPA Regions in AB evaluations and the role of TNI and the regions in accreditation of primacy labs. Greg Carroll indicated that a memo would be out soon outlining the regions' responsibility to assure competency of state DW primacy labs. The conversation also pointed out the need for outreach to regional science directors and some individual regions.

Deb Szaro, Region 2, regional science and technology director, indicated that buy in to TNI was needed at two levels. First, buy in is needed from the regional evaluators and second, from the regional labs. Lara Autry pointed out that regional offices were not given resources for participating in AB evaluations and that caused things to get off on the wrong foot. Originally, there was a five year agreement for EPA regions to participate in NELAP. Deb indicated that there is also concern about EPA being excluded from decision-making on the NELAP Board. There is a perception that there is no oversight to NELAP Board's decision-making.

EPA is still trying to determine its role in NELAP and under the new administration there is greater likelihood that statues or regulations could change.

Next steps:

Briefing for EPA Regional Science and Technology Directors

Briefing for EPA regional labs and evaluators (Kevin Kubik will be liaison)

TNI Board needs to consider organizational tweaks to allow EPA representative on NELAP Board

5. Newsletter

Patrick Conlon will be the next editor of the TNI newsletter. Topics and assignments are as follows:

TNI NEWSLETTER 2009 -1				
Featured Topics	Assigned to	Email	Due Date for Draft	Status
AB Renewals	Carol Batterton	carbat@beecreek.net	February 16	
Standards Implementation	Ilona Taunton	tauntoni@msn.com	February 16	
PT frequency	Kirstin Mccracken	kmccracken@stl-inc.com	February 16	
Stationary Source Audit Samples	Maria Friedman	Maria.Friedman@testamericainc.com	February 16	
Field Activities Update	Marlene Moore	marlene.moore@gmail.com	February 16	
J Morgan's Survey on Lab Accreditation	Judy Morgan	jmorgan@envsci.com	February 16	
Member Profile	Kirstin Mccracken	kmccracken@stl-inc.com	February 16	
Method Modification & Validation	Bob DiRienzo	dirienzo@datachem.com	February 16	
Small Lab Advocate	Len Schantz	lgs@cityofrochester.gov	February 16	

Update				
Summary of Miami Meeting/Plans for Next	Jerry Parr and Lara Autry	autry.lara@epa.gov	February 16	
Sidebar Topics	Assigned to	Email	Due Date for Draft	Status
Database	Jerry Parr	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org	February 16	
DMRQA	Jerry Paar	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org	February 16	
SW 846 Issues	Dave Speis	davids@accutest.com	February 16	
DW Cert Manual/TNI Standards Comparison Report	Jack Farrell	aex@ix.netcom.com	February 16	
Standards interpretation sidebar	Ilona Taunton	tauntoni@msn.com	February 16	
New AB's	Carol Batterton	carbat@beecreek.net	February 16	

Due date for articles is Feb. 16 and target date for publication is March 3.
 Editor for the next edition is Ken Jackson. Due date for articles is June 16 and publication target is June 30.
 Carl Craig will be editor of the following edition. Sept. 22 will be due date for articles and Oct. 6 will be target publication date.

6. Advocacy assistance to states facing budget cuts

Judy Duncan reported that several states facing budget cuts have asked for assistance in providing information to their management about the advantages/benefits of being a NELAP Accreditation Body (AB). Suggestions about possible strategies to support ABs included:

- Using Judy Morgan's survey as a basis for contacting state agencies about positive aspects of NELAP recognition, and benefits to public health
- Pointing out that states can use out of state accreditations as a way to increase revenue or can choose not to do them at all if out of state travel is an issue
- TNI should solidify the advantage of being part of the NELAP program. Can do this with case study information.
- Judy Duncan and Carol Batterton could use some paragraphs from the "Benefits" paper for state agencies to use in writing justifications for continuing the program

- We should coordinate benefits language with Judy Morgan's data. Need to emphasize the value, not the cost.

Judy D. and Carol will report back in February.

7. PT cost data

Carl Craig reviewed the data he had assembled with respect to PT costs for utility labs. Carl's data indicated the following:

- Assumption made in this data set is that DMR QA represents the typical analyses most likely to come under accreditation by small (municipal type) labs and therefore the cost of DMR QA PTs run by these laboratories are representative of the spend for a single PT round per year.
- All commercial labs removed from the data set
- All other "government labs" large and small remain in data set

- Mean = \$335
- Median = \$269
- Mode = \$125

Comments on this data included:

- Is cost really the issue for 2 PT's for small utility labs? Judy Morgan's survey data was split on this issue.
- TNI needs to put all the factors together to make a decision on this issue. Science may not be the only basis for decision. Need to consider economics, practicality, etc.
- Cost of PT's won't put a lab out of business.
- Real issue is why do them at all? Have to answer the question: What is the purpose of the PT?
- PT is only one of several factors considered in determining whether or not lab is competent.

8. New issue

Carl Craig reported that when ERA bought APG, they acquired responsibility to provide PT data for an accreditation program, GLEMP. Carl would like input on how this program and TNI can work together. Judy Duncan indicated that this is an issue that the TNI board should discuss. Once the Board has determined how to move forward, the Advocacy committee can do the ground work. Jerry Parr will put this matter on the TNI Board agenda.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be February 5, 2009, at 12 Noon CST. Potential agenda items for that meeting include:

How should TNI incorporate information from Judy Morgan's survey into our outreach efforts

How to move forward with briefings for EPA staff

Update on advocacy task list status

Attachment 1

#	LastName	FirstName	Stakeholder Group	Present	Term
1	Autry	Lara	Other	Y	1
2	Coats	Kevin	Other	N	2
3	Conlon	Pat	Other	Y	3
4	Craig	Carl	Other	Y	2
6	Moore	Marlene	Other	N	1
7	Duncan	Judy	AB	Y	1
8	Jackson	Kenneth	AB	N	2
9	Shields	Aurora	AB	Y	3
10	Wyatt	Susan	AB	N	1
11	Eaton	Andy	Lab	N	1
12	English	Zonetta	Lab	N	2
13	Perry	Michael	Lab	N	3
14	Pletl	Jim	Lab	N	1
15	Ward	Gary	Lab	Y	2
16	Wichman	Michael	Lab	N	3
17	Schantz	Leonard	Small Lab Advocate	Y	
18	Parr	Jerry	ED	Y	
19	Batterton	Carol	PA	Y	
			ASSOCIATE MEMBERS		
	McCracken	Kirstin	Lab	N	
	Morgan	Judy	Lab	Y	