



Activities of The NELAC Institute

Environmental Measurement Symposium
August 22, 2007
Judy Duncan, TNI Board Chair





History of Environmental Laboratory Accreditation

1976 Drinking Water Program

1980's EPA CLP

1986 Report to Congress

1990 CNAEL

1995 NELAC

2002 INELA

2005-2006 SSTG & PPT

2006 The NELAC Institute





The NELAC Institute Today

- Non-profit organization with members
- Managed by a Board of Directors
- Organized into **Programs** that focus on the mission of the organization
- **Administrative** services support the programs
- **Mission** *The purpose of the organization 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.*





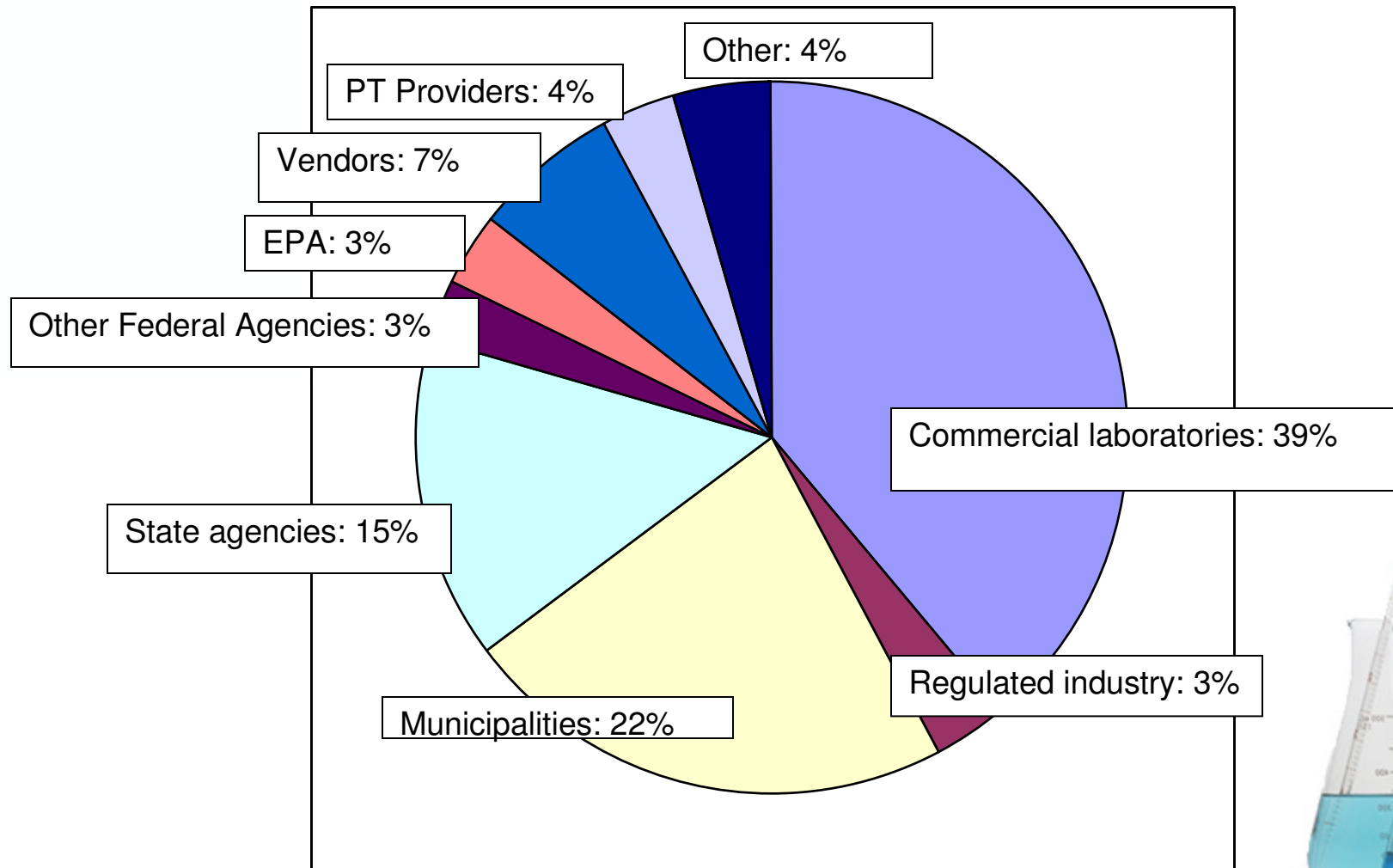
Who are our members?

- **Organizations that accredit laboratories**
 - Recognized accreditation bodies
 - States that are not recognized accreditation bodies
 - Federal agencies that operate accreditation programs
- **Accredited laboratories**
 - Commercial, Municipal, University, State, Federal, etc.
- **Others**
 - State and federal agencies that do not operate accreditation programs
 - Data users, consultants, PT Providers, vendors, etc.
 - Anyone interested in laboratory accreditation





Member Demographics





INELA & NELAC

Where are they today?

- INELA changed its Articles of Incorporation to become TNI
- NELAC discontinued some functions but will continue to exist until all key programs are fully functional in TNI
 - AA Committee discontinued as TNI NELAP Bd began to function
 - AARB still exists until TNI NELAP Bd establishes an appeal process
 - PT Boards of NELAC & TNI function in cooperation with one another





What has TNI accomplished?

- Elected our 1st Board of Directors with balanced representation from all stakeholders
- Completed a draft of a long-term strategic plan to be provided to members later this fall
- Recognized A2LA as PTOB/PTPA
- Established basic governance policies on ethics, conflict of interest, etc.





2007 TNI Board

- Judy Duncan, OK DEQ
- David Speis, Accutest
- Sharon Mertens, City of Milwaukee
- Steve Arms, FL DOH
- Joe Aiello, NJ DEP
- Jack Farrell, AEX
- Ken Jackson, NY DOH
- Barbara Finazzo, EPA
- George Detsis, DOE
- Tom McAninch, LCS
- Dave Mendenhall, UT DOH
- Judy Morgan, ESC
- Ken Olsen, Datachem
- Alfredo Sotomayor, WI DNR
- Aurora Shields, KS DHE
- Bob Wyeth, Columbia Analytical Services
- Brooke Connor, USGS





Programs of TNI

- Consensus Standards Development
- Laboratory Accreditation System
- National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation
- Proficiency Testing
- Technical Assistance
- Forum on Laboratory Accreditation
- National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC)

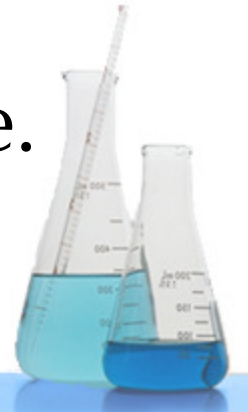




Consensus Standards Development Program

Consensus Standards Development (CSD) Board

- Expert Committees
- Develop standards for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.
- Assist the other programs with guidance.





Expert Committees

- Accreditation Body
- Field Activities
- On-site Assessment
- Proficiency Testing
- Quality Systems





CSD Board Accomplishments

- Adoption of final standards for
 - Volume 2 Accreditation Body Requirements
 - ✦ Module 1 General Requirements
 - ✦ Module 3 On-site Assessment
- Adoption of final standards for Field Sampling and Measurement
 - Volume 1 General Requirements for Field Sampling and Measurement
 - Volume 2 General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Field Sampling and Measurements





CSD Bd Accomplishments, *cont.*

- Conducted membership vote on the following Draft Interim Standards
 - Volume 1 Laboratory Requirements - PT Module and 6 QS Module
 - Volume 2 Accreditation Body Requirements - Module 2 Proficiency Testing
 - Volume 3 Proficiency Testing Requirements
 - Volume 4 Oversight of Proficiency Testing
- This voting process is ongoing with Expert Committees resolving comments from voters
- These standards will then proceed to final vote and that will result in a complete “suite” of standards currently contemplated by TNI





CSD Bd Accomplishments, *cont.*

- Formed an ad hoc Uniformity of Standards Committee which has reviewed all standard modules and volumes for completeness and consistency





Laboratory Accreditation System Committee (LASC)

- Develop a system for the accreditation of environmental laboratories:
 - policies and procedures, interpretations, guidance documents, and any related tools used by ABs to implement a national environmental laboratory accreditation program.
- Subcommittees:
 - National Database Committee
 - Non-NELAP Accreditation Bodies
 - Small Organizations





LASC Accomplishments

- Organized a committee of 17 professionals with 400 collective years experience in the environmental testing industry
- LASC members participate on subcommittees and expert committees
 - Small Organizations
 - Non-NELAP Accreditation Bodies
 - National Database
 - Accreditation Body
 - Consensus Standards Development
 - ELAB





LASC Accomplishments, *cont.*

- LASC held 8 conference calls with 75% participation
- Drafted the SOP on *Standards Interpretation* for NELAP Board approval
 - SOP lays the foundation for providing quick and thorough responses to inquiries of TNI members concerning standards interpretation
- Presented the LASC Program goals and overview to an EPA audience at their annual QA Conference in Cleveland, OH





National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)

NELAP Board (representatives from accreditation bodies)

- Final authority for implementation of the program for accreditation of labs –
 - Review & approve Accrediting Bodies to become NELAP recognized.
 - Review NELAP ABs to assure conformance.
 - Recommend PT accreditor to TNI Board.
 - Adopt acceptance limits developed by PT Board.
 - Adopt the Laboratory Accreditation System for use in the Program.
- Receive complaints & direct to proper body.
- Ensure consistent application of the standard by NELAP ABs.





NELAP Board Accomplishments

- Organized 13 Accrediting Bodies from 12 states and developed processes for operation
- Recognized NELAC AAs on an interim basis as TNI ABs
- Reviewed and approved SOP for next round of AB evaluations





Proficiency Testing (PT) Program

PT Board

- Recommend the selection of PTOB/PTPA(s).
- Monitor the PTOB/PTPA(s) to assure that they are following the requirements set forth by the organization.
- Facilitate an annual caucus on proficiency testing.
- Review and evaluate PT data for the purpose of determining the appropriateness of study limits.
- Provide recommendations to the NELAP Board as to acceptance limits.





PT Board Accomplishments

- Developing the Quality System and SOP's for the TNI PT program
 - PT Board Charter
 - *PT Acceptance Criteria SOP*
 - *Complaint Handling SOP*
 - *PT Board Operations SOP*
 - *PTOB/PTPA Evaluation SOP*
 - *PT Caucus SOP*
 - *PT Board Voting Process SOP*





PT Bd Accomplishments, *cont.*

- Ratified as adequate and sufficient for TNI PT program in its inception -
 - The NELAC/NELAP Program PT acceptance criteria
 - The NELAC/NELAP Program approval of A2LA as the PTOB/PTPA
- Currently serving as invited guests on the NELAC PT Board as it completes its remaining current business agenda items
 - Formulation requirements of PT samples from the EPA Criteria Document
 - Request to add quantitative Microbiology PT acceptance criteria in the Drinking Water matrix to accommodate recent SDWA requirements for enumerative Microbiology test data from laboratories





Technical Assistance Program

Technical Assistance Committee (TAC)

- Develop tools and templates to assist laboratories and accreditation bodies with implementing accreditation programs.
- Ensure that training programs relevant to the needs of the stakeholder community are provided.
- Ensure that laboratory assessors have a forum to discuss common issues.
- Develop a mentoring program to assist both laboratories and accreditation bodies with implementing accreditation programs.





TAC Accomplishments

- *FAQs* SOP to be approved by the TNI Bd
- Draft of Technical SOP template
- Prepared materials for Cambridge meeting
 - Accreditation Body Fees
 - Training suggestions that led to presentations
 - ◆ Manual Integration
 - ◆ Best Calibration Practices





TAC Accomplishments, *cont*

- Mentoring Workgroup planned topics and presentations for Denver and Cambridge meetings
- Presentation and proposal of a One-on-One Mentoring Plan at Cambridge
- Assessment Forum Subcommittee organized a day of Assessment Issues for Denver and Cambridge





National Environmental Monitoring Conference

- Annual technical meeting focused on the latest innovations in environmental monitoring
- Co-hosted with EPA and the Independent Laboratories Institute
- August 20-24, 2007 Cambridge, MA
- August 11-15, 2008 Washington, DC
- www.nemc.us





Forum on Laboratory Accreditation

- Semiannual meeting where TNI committees, members, and others meet to discuss common issues
- August 20-24, 2007 Cambridge, MA
- January 18-22, 2008 Newport Beach, CA





Administration

- Advocacy Committee
- Conference Planning Committee
- Financial Audit Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Policy Committee
- Website Committee

- Administrative staff





Advocacy Committee Activities

- Establish relationships with trade organizations that have an interest in accreditation issues
- Establish relationships with EPA Program Offices
- Develop presentations and papers to promote TNI





Outreach Efforts: Trade Associations

- Small focus groups with representation from :
 - American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL)
 - Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)
 - American Water Works Association (AWWA)
 - Water Environment Federation (WEF)
 - “Non-NELAP” States
- Primary focus of meetings was to identify their needs, interest and support for national laboratory accreditation





Outreach Efforts: EPA

- NELAC Special Committee letter in 2006
- TNI letter to EPA in 2006
- TNI meetings in 2007
 - Office of Solid Waste
 - Office of Water
 - Forum on Environmental Measurement (FEM)
 - Office of Inspector General
 - Office of Environmental Information
- Primary focus was to introduce TNI and indicate willingness to harmonize efforts and meet program goals





Preliminary Outcomes

- FEM designated EPA liaison to serve on Board of Directors
 - Barbara Finazzo, Region 2
- TNI requested regions to continue to provide individuals to serve as state evaluators
- Mutual interest in harmonizing drinking water certification program with TNI efforts
- Continued active participation of EPA staff in TNI activities





Website Committee Activities to Expand Capabilities

- Activities calendar for posting committee meetings and other events
- Posting committee minutes
- Joining TNI and paying dues electronically
- Ordering ISO standards, the generic TNI quality manual and shirts
- Finding TNI-related news as they occur
- Reviewing draft standards and voting on them
- Providing “How To” guidance for prospective ABs
- Linking to NELAC standards, lists of accredited labs and ABs





Availability of TNI Standards with ISO Language Included

- TNI Staff have worked with ASTM and ANSI to reach an agreement to make TNI Standards available with ISO language included
- Because TNI must pay a royalty fee for each integrated document, TNI Bd has instituted a pricing structure to recover these costs
- Both single copy and site licenses will be available
- Look for details on the TNI website within the next 2 months





Summary

- The NELAC Institute is poised to take national accreditation to the next level
 - Improve the accreditation requirements
 - Approve more states as accreditation bodies
 - Be responsive to stakeholder needs
 - Provide technical assistance
- We need your help!
 - Join our organization
 - Join a committee





The NELAC Institute

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