

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
October 3, 2024 1 pm Eastern

1. Welcome and Introductions

Steve Arms welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent (see Attachment 2) after amending it to include both a last minute regulatory comment on a FR Notice from EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and the need for some sort of response to a C&EN article on cannabis labs (not included in Attachment 2). The minutes from September 5 were unanimously approved after a motion by Mike, seconded by Sharon.

2. Updates

Newsletter

Robin reported that all articles arrived and were sent to Jerry, who sent them to Jan for creating the newsletter on September 30. The newsletter will be sent out after the NEMC Call for Abstracts and the registration website for conference in Jacksonville are available. Jerry would prefer to have the 2026 winter conference location decided, so that it can be included, but will not hold up the newsletter indefinitely for that detail.

Jacksonville Conference

- Annual Report for the TNI Annual Meeting – in an effort to avoid having each presenter repeat identical accomplishments of individual committees (SOPs approved, internal audits, etc.), the format will be revised to have each of the four programs present only an overview of the program's activities, with details provided separately for the written annual report.
- Analytical Disciplines Session – this is planned for the second half of Monday morning, but the content is still uncertain. It can be either a presentation of a strawman for the analytical disciplines scheme, or a conversation to determine what that scheme should be.
- Training Courses – in addition to a free Credentials course that will introduce participants to the website and the processes for obtaining digital badges and full credentials, courses on reliable data and internal auditing have been proposed and accepted. Reliable data and credentials will take place in the morning and internal auditing in the afternoon.
- Strategic Planning Meeting (Sunday prior to conference) – Jerry will notify invitees soon, so that travel plans can accommodate this extra day for those who participate.

Possible TNI Role in EPA OGWDW Certification Officer Training

A telephone call among Jerry, Kristin Brown (NELAP AC Chair) and Dan Hautman (Director, Technical Support Center, OGWDW) further explored the potential involvement of TNI with the Certification Officer training activity. EPA is most interested in using TNI's new credentialing software processes to track C.O. training, at some point in the future. Additional details that emerged from the conversation are that the Agency will not alter its once-per-year training schedule, but they might consider eliminating the final test (which requires the student to have memorized information that would normally be referenced during an assessment). EPA expressed disappointment that students arriving to take the course are not better prepared (i.e., already know how to assess). This is not a new issue, since for most states, the drinking water

C.O. course is the requirement to become an assessor, as the TNI Assessor training does not qualify NELAP assessors to assess drinking water labs.

3. Discuss Possible Winter 2026 Conference Locations

Jerry compiled the details of seven proposals received for the January 2026 conference into a presentation, and discussed the options. Three proposals are considered competitive – Milwaukee, Boston, and Lexington, KY. Each of those hotels has different advantages and disadvantages, with none of them standing out as overall preferable. Jerry will go back to each of those three properties and either ask for a “best offer” proposal or get answers to additional specific questions that can guide the decision.

4. Comments on Federal Register Notice

Jerry provided draft comments to be submitted by TNI to EPA’s Office of Pollution Prevention concerning a Notice that would require all labs subject to federal purchasing requirements to have a “green certification” from one non-profit that offers a self-assessment “certification” process, as an expansion of EPA’s Recommendations of Specifications, Standards and Ecolabels for Federal Purchasing (November 2022). See 89 FR 74940, 9/13/24, for details.

Discussion points included the following:

- While technically, it is a “recommendation”, in practice, we anticipate that this will become a requirement for any lab receiving federal funding.
- My Green Lab “certification” does not restrict use of hazardous chemicals in analytical methods, but is more concerned with the purchasing and handling of those chemicals.
- A self-assessment tool with no audit (and no standard) cannot be considered a “certification”.
- The stated requirement that labs use only one source for this required “certification” is not justified as sole source procurements are required to be.
- For a wide-sweeping requirement such as is announced in this FR Notice, a proposed rule would be appropriate, not a simple notice.
- The FR Notice does not require Agency-wide review, as would be necessary under formal rule-making, thus the regulatory programs whose methods require (or utilize) hazardous chemicals were obviously not made aware of this new activity.
- Several EPA “insiders” are working to inform other program offices.
- ACIL and the Environmental Monitoring Council also plan to submit comments.

Jerry will continue to revise the draft comment document, which must be submitted no later than October 15.

5. C&EN Article on Cannabis Labs

The meeting time was expired. This topic will wait for a future meeting.

6. Discuss Outreach Plan and NELAP Vision

The meeting time was expired, so this topic will be postponed for a future meeting.

7. New Business

There was no new business offered.

8. Next Meeting

The next teleconference is scheduled for **Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 1 pm Eastern.** An agenda and any needed documents will be provided prior to the meeting.

Attachment 1

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Present/Absent
1.	Steve Arms, Chair	Other	Present
2.	Stacie Crandall	Lab	Absent
3.	Mike Delaney	Other	Present
4.	Zonetta English	Lab	Present
5.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Absent
6.	Janice Willey	Federal	Present
7.	Robin Cook	Lab	Present
8.	Sharon Mertens, Vice Chair	Lab	Present
9.	William Lipps	Other	Present
	Associate Members		
	Sheela Agrawal	TNI Ambassador	Present
	Celeste Crowley	Other	Absent
	Stephanie Drier	AB	Absent
	Paul Junio	TNI Ambassador	Present
	Silky Labie	Other	Absent
	Ashley Larssen	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Judy Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Devon Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Lily Sanchez	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Aurora Shields	Other	Absent
	Elizabeth Turner	Lab	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Lynn Bradley	TNI PA	Present

Attachment 2 – Agenda as approved, October 3, 2024

- Welcome and Roll Call
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes (September minutes attached)
- Updates
 - Newsletter
 - Jacksonville conference
 - Possible TNI Role in EPA OGWDW Certification Officer Training
- Discuss Possible Winter 2026 Conference Locations (see attached pdf of PowerPoint)
- Discuss Outreach Plan and NELAP Vision (see attached Vision options and Outreach Plan)
- New Business
- Adjourn