

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting

July 2, 2026

1PM Eastern

1. Call to Order

Steve Arms, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – Seven Voting members (quorum met) and one Associate member.

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

The June meeting minutes were distributed for review. A motion was made by Mike to approve the June 4, 2026, minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Sharon and unanimously approved.

2. Newsletter Status

The Committee discussed the recently distributed newsletter. Most members had received it, and the overall reaction was positive. Devon was thanked for serving as editor and for taking on the editing responsibility for two editions. Devon reported that the editing process went smoothly and that contributors were generally responsive.

The Committee clarified an issue concerning notification registration. Paul explained that users only need to re-register if their email address has changed because the notification list is maintained separately from the notification email lists.

Mike noted that he did not receive the newsletter and requested a copy because he distributes it to ambassadors in New England. Jerry Parr agreed to forward it to him.

The next newsletter will follow the summer meeting. Steve encouraged members to consider volunteering as editor-in-chief for that edition. No response was received from Duncan Miller regarding his anticipated NGAB article.

3. NEMC Summer Meeting Update

Jerry Parr reported that preparations for the summer meeting were on track. Approximately 400–450 attendees had registered, which is consistent with expectations in the registration cycle. The hotel room block was approximately 92% sold out, with the room block and regular registration deadline remaining open through July 10.

Six people had registered for the QMS exam and 13 for the radiochemistry class. Minor schedule adjustments had been made, including switching the Mentor Session with Chemistry Committee meetings.

The Thursday morning session had undergone a more substantial revision. Originally planned as an EPA update covering drinking water, wastewater, and RCRA programs, the session was restructured because EPA personnel could attend but had difficulty obtaining approval to speak. The revised session now includes:

- Troy providing an update on SW-846.

- Jerry providing an update on developments in the clean water and drinking water programs based on available information.
- William Lipps discussing an interlaboratory study involving PFAS and biosolids.
- Sharon Mertens providing an update on the Environmental Monitoring Coalition.

Jerry noted that conference food costs were substantially increased. They were approximately 25% higher than the previous year, with service charges adding further expense.

The committee confirmed that it would not meet during the Summer Meeting week. Instead, members agreed to hold the regular committee meeting on **Thursday, August 13, at 1:00 p.m.**, allowing the group to discuss the conference while it was still fresh and begin planning the next newsletter. Ilona agreed to reschedule the meeting.

4. Promotion of NGABs

The Committee continued discussion on promoting the use of Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies (NGABs). The original plan had been to develop a newsletter article, but Duncan Miller was not able to complete this. This led to discussion of taking a broader approach.

The Committee reviewed the presentation previously given by Duncan Miller in Boston. The presentation identified potential benefits of NGABs, including technical expertise, efficiency and flexibility, faster turnaround, adaptability, cost effectiveness, neutrality and impartiality, quality assurance, training and development, alignment with national and international standards, global recognition, and stakeholder engagement.

Jerry suggested using the presentation as an outline for developing a more substantive article or presentation. Members agreed that the material needed additional substance, particularly concerning equivalency and how NGABs are used by states.

Sharon suggested obtaining input from other NGABs, including individuals such as Tracy (PJLA) and Stephanie (A2LA), and Ilona added Patrick Selig (ANAB) as another potential contributor. Duncan is an NGAB also (IAS). The group also discussed the value of developing material that could be used beyond a newsletter—for example, as a presentation to the NELAP Accreditation Council, EPA, or other groups involved in laboratory accreditation.

The Committee agreed that the material should include examples of how states currently use NGABs or third-party assessors. Ilona explained that states handle this differently. Generally, they use NGABs in an assessor or auditing capacity without formally recognizing the NGAB accreditation itself.

California was discussed as an example where NGAB recognition may be specifically incorporated into the state's approach, although Ilona indicated that this should be verified.

The discussion also highlighted the distinction between a state hiring or accepting an individual as a qualified third-party assessor and formally recognizing an NGAB's accreditation. State programs retain authority over determining whether individual assessors are qualified even when an NGAB is involved.

Members noted that the timing may be favorable for discussing these issues because states will be addressing related requirements as new standards are implemented.

The Committee agreed that Jerry would convert the existing presentation into a Word-based outline. The outline will be circulated to NGAB contacts for comments and suggestions. Ilona can help as needed also.

The communication should clearly explain that the purpose of the presentation is to promote the use of NGABs/third-party assessors, so recipients understand the objective and can provide relevant input. The resulting material may ultimately be useful both as a newsletter article and as a presentation or broader advocacy/outreach resource.

The committee also briefly discussed mutual recognition language in the developing accreditation standards. Ilona explained that mutual recognition remains established through policy on the NELAP side rather than being fully incorporated into the standard, and that related issues are being discussed through the NELAP Accreditation Council.

5. State of Accreditation Report

The Committee reviewed the status of its planned State of Accreditation report. Jerry still plans to prepare the draft procedure to develop this report.

The proposed approach is to solicit information from each of the organization's accreditation programs and compile it into a broader report. Steve noted that a recent annual-report article in the newsletter appeared to contain useful material and structure that could serve as a starting point.

Jerry agreed to revise and expand that material into a Draft and circulate it to the relevant Executive Committees for feedback. Ilona suggested also providing the previous State of Accreditation report as an example of the type of information being requested.

The committee distinguished the report from committee charters: charters establish goals and objectives, whereas the State of Accreditation report should focus more on accomplishments and the current state of accreditation activities.

6. New Business

Wisconsin Drinking Water Certification Issue

Paul Junio raised an issue involving the Wisconsin DNR and EPA Region 5 concerning drinking water radiochemistry certification.

Wisconsin reportedly does not independently perform certification in certain areas and instead accepts laboratories based on other forms of accreditation, commonly TNI accreditation. Paul reported that EPA Region 5, during an audit, appeared to be raising questions about this approach and potentially requiring Wisconsin to undertake additional certification activities.

The discussion indicated that the issue may extend beyond radiochemistry to other drinking water areas that Wisconsin does not directly administer. Members noted that Wisconsin's statutory framework may make changes difficult because relevant requirements are established in statute rather than solely through administrative rules.

The committee agreed that this issue be followed. Paul will share the relevant correspondence with Jerry and others. An update should be provided in during the Ambassador's update in September.

7. Next Meeting

The next scheduled teleconference will be August 13, 2026, at 1pm Eastern. An agenda and any needed documents will be provided prior to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48PM Eastern.

Attachment A – Advocacy Roster

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Attendance 6
1.	Steve Arms, Chair	Other	Present
2.	Mike Delaney	Other/ TNI Ambassador	Present
3.	Zonetta English	Lab/TNI Ambassador	Present (1:25 Eastern)
4	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Present
5.	Janice Willey	Federal	Absent
6.	Robin Cook	Lab	Present
7.	Sharon Mertens, Vice Chair	Lab	Present
8.	William Lipps	Other	Absent
9.	Devon Morgan	Lab/TNI Ambassador	Present
	Associate Members		
	Sheela Agrawal	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Celeste Crowley	Other	Absent
	Paul Junio	TNI Ambassador	Present
	Silky Labie	Other	Absent
	Heather Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Judy Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Lily Sanchez	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Aurora Shields	Other	Absent
	Elizabeth Turner	Lab	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Ilona Taunton	PA	Present

Attachment B: Advocacy Action Item Summary 2026

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Date Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
1	Ambassador Meetings – March, June, September, December					Ongoing			The Ambassador meeting will be added to the regular Committee agenda on a quarterly basis.
2	NELAP Vision and Outreach Plan								Continue discussion of how TNI might assist EPA's drinking water lab certification efforts if Agency staffing/funding gets drastically reduced. 3/5: Possibly plan discussion in Houston.
3	CANNRA		Jerry				4/2/26	CLOSED	Jerry will provide TNI documents. 4/2: Jerry provided documents: Data Integrity Language in Field Standard and possible TNI courses that could be of assistance.
4	Single PT Discussion		Jerry						3/5: Jerry will reach out to Carol Gebhart. Can this be considered in Module 1 update? 4/1: Discussed with Carol and Committee will look into this.
5	State of Accreditation Report		Jerry		2/5/26	Plan to start in July.			2/5: Not due until end of year – Begin work in July. 7/2: Jerry is working on a procedure for developing this report. He is also planning to convert information from the annual report into a starting DRAFT of the State of Accreditation Report. Send to Program Chairs and send a copy of the previous report.

[illegible]