

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting

August 13, 2026

1PM Eastern

1. Call to Order

Steve Arms, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – Three Voting members (no quorum) and two Associate members. No formal business can be done without a quorum, but the Committee decided to hold a meeting to share information.

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent though the Houston Summer meeting will be discussed before the Newsletter.

The July meeting minutes were distributed for review. The July 2, 2026, minutes could not be formally approved because there were not enough members present for approval. The minute minutes will be reviewed during the September meeting.

2. Long Beach Winter Meeting

Jerry Parr provided an update on planning for the Long Beach meeting. The schedule is substantially developed. Monday through Wednesday will follow the usual meeting format, with the opening plenary on Monday morning and concurrent breakout sessions Monday afternoon through Wednesday. A special half-day session involving California participants is also being developed for Thursday morning.

Jerry discussed the significant increase in hotel food and beverage costs. He reported that the proposed registration fee could increase from the \$625 level used for the Boston meeting to approximately \$700 if the meeting continues to provide lunches on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The hotel contract requires TNI to use the hotel's food services and includes a \$30,000 food-and-beverage minimum in exchange for complimentary meeting space. Jerry's current food and beverage estimate was approximately \$80,000 before tax, or approximately \$86,000 including tax. Eliminating the two lunches would reduce the food and beverage cost substantially while still leaving the total above the \$30,000 minimum. Other meetings don't offer the amount of food that TNI does.

Long Beach has numerous restaurants and other food options within a short walking distance of the hotel. A market is available for sandwiches and similar items within the hotel also. The hotel restaurant is closed.

The general thought was that eliminating the two provided lunches could help reduce registration costs without significantly affecting attendance. A registration fee in the general range of \$575–\$625 was discussed as a possible alternative. Jerry will take the issue to the Finance Committee for further review and will continue working with the hotel on food and meeting arrangements. It was noted that some employees need to know the food cost ahead of time to know how much funding to request.

Jerry shared the preliminary schedule for the meeting.

3. Summer Meeting

The Committee then reviewed the Summer Meeting - presentations, awards, committee activities, upcoming programs, and possible newsletter topics.

4. Newsletter

The newsletter is tentatively targeted for mid-October. The editor will be chosen during the September meeting.

Potential Newsletter Item	Proposed Author/Contact	Notes
Long Beach meeting update and registration	Jerry Parr	Include meeting information and registration details
Call for abstracts for next Summer Meeting	Jerry Parr	Call for abstracts expected to open in December
Charlie Carter Award / Mitzi Miller	Judy Morgan and/or Calista; possibly combined with member spotlight	Consider combining the award story with a broader member profile. Add information about how to nominate someone for this award.
Standards update	Paul Junio	General update on standards and comment periods
LAB update	Aaren Alger/Ilona Taunton	May be incorporated into the Houston meeting summary unless there is significant new information
Training update	Ilona Taunton	Include upcoming classes and notification process
New/free webcasts	Ilona Taunton and Jerry Parr	Include regulations, credentialing, NELAP, and standards-development webcasts
NELAP AC / feedback	Alfredo Sotomayor and Ilona Taunton	Potential article depending on progress with feedback survey and NELAP AC Dispute SOP work
California application	Ilona Taunton	If the application is received before publication, note the significance of a new application
PTPA annual report / future reporting	Bob Wyeth	Potentially incorporate into the broader Houston meeting summary
Jack Farrell Scholarship	Joe Manzella	Award information and photographs; maybe incorporate into Houston meeting summary.

Potential Newsletter Item	Proposed Author/Contact	Notes
		Include in article about the scholarship if the next scholarship application period is open in time for publication.
First-time attendees / ballgame outing	Paul Junio and Joe Manzella	Short sidebar with photographs
Board election nominations	Sharon Mertens	Fall nominations announcement
Credentialing/digital badges	Ken, possibly others	Brief status update, include what is currently available, how to apply, and participation.
SW-846 developments	Jerry Parr, with Troy Strock if possible	Jerry will contact Troy regarding an article
Drinking Water developments	Jerry Parr	Potential article based on interest expressed during the meeting
Methylene chloride reduction	Sharon Mertens / Judy Morgan	Sharon will contact Judy after checking whether the subject has appeared recently
Radiochemistry training class	Ilona Taunton	May be incorporated into the general training article
Method codes	Paul Junio	Explain changes to method-code structure and current work on additional codes. Pull info out of NELAP AC updates?
Summer Meeting/TNI Houston Meeting Summary	Ilona Taunton, Paul Junio, Jerry Parr, and committee chairs as appropriate	Likely primary article; individual committee updates may be incorporated here
Member spotlight	TBD; possibly combined with Mitzi Miller Charlie Carter Award article.	Avoid duplicating the Charlie Carter Award coverage
Alfredo's Musings	Alfredo Sotomayor	Regular article

5. Promotion of NGABs Update

Jerry confirmed that he had converted the presentation on NGAB outreach into a Word-based outline but had not yet distributed it. He agreed to send the outline so members can review it before the next meeting.

6. State of Accreditation Report Update

Jerry noted the SOP has not been completed yet.

7. New Business

None.

8. Next Meeting

The next scheduled teleconference will be September 3, 2026, at 1pm Eastern. This meeting will include the Quarterly Ambassador's Meeting. An agenda and any needed documents will be provided prior to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 PM Eastern.

Attachment A – Advocacy Roster

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Attendance 6
1.	Steve Arms, Chair	Other	Present
2.	Mike Delaney	Other/ TNI Ambassador	Absent
3.	Zonetta English	Lab/TNI Ambassador	Absent
4.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Absent
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	Absent
	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	Present
	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.

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6	Promote use of NGABs		Jerry	Steve	Boston	2/5/26			2/5: Article planned for Newsletter – Duncan 6/4: Article still needed. 7/2: Jerry will work on presentation based on Duncan's presentation in Boston and then share it with the other NGABs for input. Presentation can be given to the NELAP AC and other interested parties.
7	Free Webcast: New Members Welcome History and Foundation of TNI		Jerry		3/5/26	3/5/26			4/1: Committee started review of DRAFT presentation. 5/7/26: Final will be reviewed by Committee in June. 6/4: Review complete. Jerry will make updates and work on the recordings for the other Programs that will be referenced in the presentation.
8	Webcast: History and Foundation of TNI				3/5/26			Closed	4/1: Jerry sent an email that the current training done by him and Marlene cover this topic and there is not a need to update it.
9	Prepare a procedure for how to update the State of Accreditation report.	SOP	Jerry		3/5/26	TBD		Closed	3/5: Jerry will work on this. 7/4: Closed and continued updates can be found in Item 5.
10	List Serve Sign-up for Training website.		Jerry William		6/4/26				
11	Summer Meeting – Long Beach		Jerry		8/13/26				8/13: Jerry will discuss whether to drop lunches in Long Beach due to food costs and ample restaurants in the area.