



# **The NELAC Institute:**

## **The Transition of NELAC and INELA to TNI**

**November 14, 2007**





# OVERVIEW

- Brief History
- New Beginning
- Future of Endless Possibility





# HISTORY

- Origins of a National Program (1976-1986)
  - Drinking Water Certification Program
  - State Certification Program Expansion
  - Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Contract Laboratory Program (CLP)
- Problems
  - Inconsistent Inspections
  - No Reciprocity
  - No Access to Information
  - Accreditation Not Available for Everything





# THE NEXT 20 YEARS

- 1986 – 1994 Evolution of NELAC
  - 1986 Report to Congress
  - 1990 Environmental Monitoring Management Council (EMMC) Report
  - 1991 – 1992: Committee for National Accreditation of Environmental Laboratories (CNAEL) Recommendations
  - 1993 – 1994: State / EPA Focus Group
- 1995 – 2006: NELAC
- 2002 – 2006: INELA





# NELAC

- Organization of state and federal officials who vote on requirements.
- Input from others considered.
- Implementation a voluntary decision by individual states.
- **Develop** uniform accreditation standards
- **Adopt** standards for use in accreditation programs
- Develop system for **recognition** of state agencies (Accrediting Authorities)





# WHERE WERE WE?

- The program had achieved some success.
  - 13 Accrediting Authorities.
  - > 2000 accredited laboratories.
  - Recognized competency standard.
  - Some help for laboratories (QM template) had been done
- Much more needed to be done.
  - The NELAC standard perceived as onerous.
  - The NELAC standard was not perceived as improving data quality
  - Many states are not participating.
  - Many, many laboratories not participating
- Program too reliant on EPA.





THE NELAC INSTITUTE



# TNI: A 501(c)3 Organization

Board of Directors

Self-Governing  
Programs

- ☐ NELAP
- ☐ LASP
- ☐ TAP
- ☐ CSDP
- ☐ PTP
- ☐ Forum

Staff

Administrative Committees

- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Conference Planning

Individual Members







# MISSION

The purpose of TNI 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.





# 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





# 2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Migration of NELAC and INELA programs into TNI
  - Consensus standards development
  - NELAP
  - Proficiency Testing
  - Technical Assistance
- Development of a strategic plan
- Outreach efforts to stakeholder groups





# FUTURE EFFORTS

- TNI Advocacy Committee
  - Continue broad-based outreach efforts with trade associations and EPA.
  - Begin a series of Focus Group meetings on potential changes needed.
  - Take results to appropriate committees in TNI
- Technical Assistance
  - Continue to develop tools to help laboratories become accredited.





# SUMMARY

- The NELAC Institute is poised to take national accreditation to the next level by:
  - Improving accreditation requirements;
  - Approving more states as accreditation bodies;
  - Being responsive to stakeholder needs; and
  - Providing technical assistance.
- We need your help!
  - Join our organization!!
  - Join a committee!!!





# FORUM ON LABORATORY ACCREDITATION

- Semiannual meeting where TNI committees, members, and others meet to discuss common issues
- January 14-17, 2008, Newport Beach, CA





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