Good Day:

My commentary on why NRC nuclear safety inspections are necessary was posted this morning to UCS's All Things Nuclear blog at http://allthingsnuclear.org/dlochbaum/why-nrc-inspections-are-necessary-columbia

The NRC is currently reviewing how it conducts engineering inspections with the objective of seeing if they can ben made more efficient and effective.

The nuclear industry has a proposal --- the NRC's engineering inspections can be made more efficient and effective by eliminating. In their place, the industry would conduct self-assessments and mail their results to the NRC.

The posted commentary describes how NRC inspectors corrected a longstanding safety slide at the Columbia Generating Station in Washington. The owner relaxed safety limits without prior NRC approval, because they considered the relaxations to be "editorial changes." The NRC inspectors did not go for such safety semantics.

Today's post is the first in a series that will show how NRC inspectors correct owner's mistaken notions about what is -- and is not -- appropriate safety behavior.

The NRC"s engineering inspections might be made more efficient and more effective, but not by replacing them with industry self-assessments.

But maybe the nuclear industry is onto something (other than illicit controlled substances.) Maybe nuclear power plants can be made more efficient and more effective by replacing their senior managers with Greenpeace staffers. Any industry volunteers?

Thanks,
Dave Lochbaum
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P.S. - On an unrelated topic, if any one knows of someone who self-audited past tax returns and mailed the IRS a check after finding they underpaid their taxes or someone who mailed the police a check for having exceeded a posted speed limit sign but not getting pulled over by a traffic cop, please let me know. I'm sure that self-assessments correct such shortcomings every single day of the week (with the exception of days having a "y" in them).