Zyn's FDA Authorization: A Global Marketing Tool for the Tobacco Industry

News sites and social media posts from around the world are referencing the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s marketing authorization of Zyn nicotine pouches. Recent examples suggest the tobacco industry may be using the FDA's 2025 authorization to promote Zyn globally and shape policy and public perceptions.

Advocates from around the world have reported examples to STOP in which the FDA's authorization appears to be used to:

- Lend credibility to the product, framing it as scientifically-reviewed and regulator-backed
- Indirectly endorse claims about nicotine pouches, including their harm reduction potential, that might not be true or that go beyond the FDA's authorization
- Call for similar industry-friendly regulations in other countries

A page from the industry's playbook

Intentionally sowing confusion and trying to influence regulation in favor of its profits is a known tactic of the tobacco industry. Evidence suggests Philip Morris International (PMI), owner of Zyn nicotine pouches, may be behind some of these media stories.

- **An op-ed from an industry-linked organization cites the FDA decision in arguing against banning pouches in India:** In a November 2025 op-ed, Dr. Nveed Chaudhary, Chair of the Scientific and Standards Committee at the Global Institute for Novel Nicotine (GINN), wrote that the FDA's decision "confirms the risk-proportionate approach" to regulation. He characterizes the FDA's process as "one of the world's most stringent regulatory pathways," and says it has "explicitly acknowledged the public health benefits of nicotine pouches"—portraying pouches as a proven tobacco harm reduction tool. While GINN has stated that it does not take funding from tobacco companies, its Director General is a former public affairs manager for Philip Morris International.

- **A PMI PR push about Zyn manufacturing in Pakistan results in multiple "independent" media articles citing the FDA decision:** Four articles (1, 2, 3, 4) announcing a new Zyn manufacturing factory, appearing on different news sites, all mention the FDA's authorization and frame it as validation of pouches' potential for reduced harm. Each article uses nearly the same wording in describing the FDA's decision, and many include the same quotes from the same individuals. One of the articles references a press release, suggesting PMI sent an announcement of the new factory, which included PMI-approved language around the FDA decision, to local media.

- **Industry-supported front group lauds the FDA decision and frames pouches as harm reduction tools in the Philippines:** Two separate articles (1, 2) appearing on two different news sites, featured quotes from an industry front group, the Nicotine Consumers Union of the Philippines. The group notes on its website that it receives support from PMFTC Inc., PMI's affiliate in the Philippines. In the articles, the president of the group portrays the FDA decision positively and frames pouches as harm reduction tools. He also states that the FDA decision "complements our Vape Law" and the country's "harm reduction efforts."

While some of the other articles reported to STOP made mention of pouches' addiction risks, most portrayed the decision in a positive light and omitted important statements from the FDA about Zyn, including:

> "While today's actions permit these specific tobacco products to be legally marketed in the U.S. to adults 21 and older, **it does not mean these tobacco products are safe, nor are they "FDA approved**." There is no safe tobacco product; youth should not use tobacco products and adults who do not use tobacco products should not start." (emphasis added)

Nevertheless, PMI has characterized the FDA's marketing authorization as an "important step to protect the public health," despite nicotine pouches not being proven tobacco cessation tools, their long-term health risks remaining unknown, and the growing risk of igniting a new youth nicotine epidemic, similar to the e-cigarette epidemic.

PMI followed a similar pattern in misrepresenting the FDA's 2020 "modified risk tobacco product" approval of its heated tobacco product, IQOS, as a "milestone for public health," despite the FDA acknowledging that IQOS is not proven to reduce tobacco-related harm.

Local advocates are identifying a familiar pattern of the industry targeting the media with misinformation.

Members of the media must be aware of tobacco industry attempts to misrepresent the FDA's recent marketing authorization of ZYN in the U.S. and its attempts to conflate nicotine pouches with snus in its "harm reduction" framing. The industry has historically sought to mislead the public and policymakers about the harms of its products and continues to try to influence regulation to favor product sales, not public health.

STOP. A GLOBAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY WATCHDOG

About STOP
STOP is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry tactics that undermine public health. Comprised of a network of academic and public health organizations, STOP researches and monitors the tobacco industry, shares intelligence to counter its tactics, and exposes its misdeeds to a global audience. STOP is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies as part of the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. For more information, visit exposetobacco.org.