



Swing-state Democrats split on trans rights

INSIDE, 6A

TIMES RECORDER

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Nicotine is the primary driver of tobacco addiction in the form of cigarettes, vapes and most other forms of commercial tobacco. The greatest health risks arise when tobacco is burned, which generates thousands of toxic substances. PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Movement touts addictive drug as beneficial, but dangers persist

Hasmeena Kathuria
University of Wisconsin-Madison
THE CONVERSATION

An ironic development emerging alongside the “Make America Healthy Again” movement is the portrayal of nicotine as a wellness and performance-enhancing product. Across social media, podcasts, wellness communities and tech startups, prominent wellness personalities and other influencers are portraying nicotine as a misunderstood compound whose potential benefits have been overshadowed by its negative association with cigarette smoking.

As a result, nicotine is being repositioned from an addictive substance linked to tobacco use to a natural product that can be used for everything from improving focus to protecting against cognitive decline. This trend includes use of nicotine alone in noncombustible products such as nicotine pouches, or in combination with caffeine and nootropics, which are substances marketed to enhance cognition.

As a pulmonary physician-scientist who studies nicotine addiction and the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine products, I am concerned about claims that nicotine can enhance wellness, productivity and cognitive performance.



Nicotine, in products such as nicotine pouches, is being repositioned from an addictive substance linked to tobacco use to a natural product that can be used for everything from improving focus to protecting against cognitive decline.

Distinguishing between nicotine and tobacco

Some of these claims stem from the observation that nicotine is a naturally occurring plant

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New USDA rules delay solar grants for farmers

Rural Energy for America Program has invested more than \$4.8 billion since 2014

REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump’s looming changes to a rural energy program that has distributed billions of dollars in recent years will make it harder for many farmers to access funds for such things as solar arrays and energy efficiency projects, farmers, energy companies and analysts said.

It is Trump’s latest move to slash government support for renewable energy. While working on the changes, the administration had halted applications this year for the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Energy for America Program, or REAP.

In the last decade, REAP has helped fund more than 19,000 energy projects by American farmers and small business owners, according to the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. The projects include solar and wind installations, manure biodigesters and energy efficiency upgrades.

Between 2014 and 2025, REAP invested over \$4.8 billion across grants and loan guarantees in renewable

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Chad Raines, a Texas farmer and shepherd, rotates his sheep across the six different solar panel zones on the land. Changes to the Rural Energy for America Program will require farmers to complete energy efficiency projects before applying for funding. ANNIE RICE/REUTERS FILE

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