

Under threat of Zika spread, majority of Americans support employing GM mosquitoes

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Zika is coming to Florida. [Two new cases of the virus linked to serious birth defects](#) have been reported in the state, and scientists believe it could spread rapidly come summer as mosquito populations explode. And we're still a long way away from a vaccine for the virus.

The good news is that scientists still might have a way to stop its spread — by releasing a swarm of genetically modified mosquitoes across the Florida Keys. Yes, it sounds like the premise of pulpy Michael Crichton novel that ends with a zombie horde infected with GMO mosquito viruses.

*New Times* first looked [in-depth at the idea of unleashing GMO mosquitoes in the Keys in 2012](#), when another virus — dengue fever — threatened to overtake South Florida. Scientists began looking at a novel solution: engineered mosquitoes created by British firm Oxitec.

The GMO mosquitoes were never used in the dengue fight. And until the Zika outbreak, those types of concerns seemed to be prevalent. Nearly 170,000 [people signed a Change.org petition](#) against releasing the winged insects in the Keys.

The threat of Zika seems to have changed that equation, though. The virus has been linked to microcephaly, a serious birth defect that causes children to have abnormally small heads. A survey from Purdue University in February [found 78 percent of people nationwide](#) support GMO mosquitoes to fight Zika; a new poll from the AP found 56 percent backing.

**Read full, original post:** [Genetically Modified Mosquitoes Probably Headed to Florida Keys to Fight Zika](#)