

Florida senator voices support for Zika-fighting mosquitoes

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) said he'd support the use of genetically modified mosquitoes in the Lower Keys to help stop the spread of the Zika virus.

"I think this is going to be such a crisis that we've got to move ahead with it, certainly the pilot study," Nelson said.

Florida has reported 102 documented cases — none in the Keys but the most in the nation — of the mosquito-borne virus, which emerged last year in South America. The virus, while causing mild sickness, has been associated with severe birth defects.

Oxitec, a British company, wants to release about 3 million genetically modified mosquitoes in the Keys as part of the first-ever trial in the U.S. of such engineering. The genetic change is intended to produce offspring that die young and can't reproduce.

Nelson's comments came a day after Gov. Rick Scott said he intends to travel to Washington next week to ask federal officials to quickly come to agreement on a plan to deal with the spread of the Zika virus. Nelson also continued pushing for \$1.9 billion in emergency funding to help deal with Zika. The funding request, made by President Obama, remains tied up in Congress.

Read full, original post: Florida senator Nelson: Release GM mosquitoes in the Keys to battle Zika