

## Florida Keys residents divided over use of biotech mosquitoes in fight against Zika

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

A biotech mosquito is kicking up a political storm in the Florida Keys.

Oxitec Ltd., a British maker of genetically modified insects, plans to go door to door in coming weeks to pitch Key Haven, Fla., voters on the virtues of a modified mosquito that the company says can help kill off wild populations known to spread maladies like the Zika virus and dengue fever.

Critics of Oxitec's proposed field trial are pushing back with yard signs and social-media campaigns, warning that the biotech mosquitoes aren't needed to curb diseases and could harm local ecosystems.

The issue is dividing some of the about 1,000 citizens of Key Haven, an island community near Key West, where Oxitec and local pest-control officials are seeking federal permission for a trial release.

In April, local officials decided to hold a public vote on the plan, scheduled for August.

"We'll be trying to speak to every Key Haven resident we can," said Derric Nimmo, Oxitec's product development manager, who is leading public outreach in Florida. "The risk of Zika is very, very real. The risk of this technology is virtually nonexistent."

**Read full, original post:** [Florida Town Wary of Fighting Zika With Biotech Mosquitoes](#)