

Lessons from Ground Zero: Key Haven rejected release of GMO mosquitoes because of a 'mistrust of science'

When Monroe County [Florida] held a nonbinding referendum last year on whether to allow the experimental release of genetically modified mosquitoes, most voters said yes.

This was as the mosquito-borne Zika crisis was exploding. The Food and Drug Administration had already started to clear the way for the field trial.

But residents of Key Haven—the proposed site of the mosquito control experiment—voted against it. And the company that breeds the mosquitoes started looking for another site.

Now, scientists are trying to understand how public opposition to genetically modified mosquitoes was able to sway the proposed research in the Keys.

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[Researchers] found three quarters of the responses opposed the release of the mosquitoes—the most ardent reasons had to do with a general mistrust in science and in the government.

The supporters of the trial were more likely to point to the potential benefits to human health. And they were more likely to have higher levels of education.

[Dr. Justin Stoler, who was one of the authors of the study] hopes the findings can start a conversation among scientists, especially as new technologies like gene editing show promise for public health.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Scientists Read Thousands Of Comments To Understand Public Opinion On GMO Mosquitoes](#)