

## Inside Key Haven: GMO mosquito debate reached fever pitch in release town

In the Florida Keys, a referendum fight last year took on all the trappings of a modern-day political campaign – radio ads and zealous canvassers, slogans and, yes, misleading attacks. Seven years after Oxitec first arrived in Florida, the company still awaits a trial, and an answer to the question: Can scientific data trump political scare tactics?

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Nearly a year after the referendum, opposition and confusion in Key Haven remain.

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“It was made with herpes and E. coli. Let’s just start there,” Mara Daly, an Islamadora resident with one son said in an interview. “So as a mother and not being scientific, I hear those two words and ‘why are you using human diseases and insects with bad stuff? Even if they can’t transmit it to us?’ ”

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“I always say that stories trump data and relationships trump stories,” [James Lavery, the Hilton chair in global health ethics at Emory University] said. “Scientists just sort of believe that their data should prevail at all times because it’s science, but we know from policy that that’s just not the way it works.”

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In August, Cinnamon Bloss, a researcher at the University of California, San Diego, broke down the opposition to the Oxitec trial in the [Journal for the American Medical Association](#), analyzing the 2,624 public comments provided to the FDA during its review.

She found 75% of the comments opposed the trial. Of those, 49% cited concerns about ecological safety, 61% discussed human health, 68% genetically-modified organisms, and 30% mistrust of the government or industry.

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[T]he Oxitec trial will go on somewhere in Monroe County. A specific location has not been selected, and there is no clear timeframe without the EPA’s approval.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Mosquito battle gets political](#)**