

750 Million GMO Mosquitoes Approved for release in Florida Keys

The plan to release over 750 million genetically engineered mosquitoes into the Florida Keys in 2021 and 2022 has final approval from local authorities, despite objections from many local residents and environmental groups.

The proposal had already won state and federal approval. "With all the urgent crises facing our nation and the State of Florida – the Covid-19 pandemic, racial injustice, climate change – the administration has used tax dollars and government resources for a Jurassic Park experiment.

Now the Monroe County Mosquito Control District has given the final permission needed. What could possibly go wrong? We don't know, because EPA unlawfully refused to seriously analyze environmental risks, now without further review of the risks, the experiment can proceed.

Jaydee Hanson, policy director for the International Center for Technology Assessment and Center for Food Safety

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This pilot project is designed to see if genetically engineered mosquitos are a viable alternative to spraying insecticides to control the *Aedes aegypti*, also known as the yellow fever mosquito. This species carries several deadly diseases including Zika, dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever.

The GM mosquito has been named OX5034. It has been altered to produce female offspring that die in the larval stage before they can bite and spread disease.

These mosquitos are also approved to be released in Harris County, Texas according to Oxitec, the U.S.-owned, British-based company that developed the GMO.

Do you think these GM mosquitoes are a better choice than spraying pesticides? Or is there a better alternative?