



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Chad Huff, Public Education & Information Officer

O: 305.292.7190

C: 305.481-2207

E: chuff@keysmosquito.org

August 19, 2020

FKMCD Board APPROVES Oxitec Mosquito Pilot Project in Florida Keys

The Florida Keys Mosquito Control District's (FKMCD) five member board has **APPROVED** a proposal by Oxitec to utilize non-biting male, genetically modified mosquitoes as part of a trial to determine their effectiveness in controlling the wild population of *Aedes aegypti*, the mosquito which is responsible for spreading diseases such as dengue fever.

FKMCD and Oxitec have both said that the pilot project will not take place until 2021.

The FKMCD board's four to one vote in FAVOR comes after Federal and State approvals of an 'Experimental Use Permit' issued earlier this summer by the Environmental Protection Agency and The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

FKMCD commissioner Brandon Pinder cast the dissenting vote.

At the center of the project is a male *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that has been modified to only provide live male offspring when mating with a female in the wild. Female offspring do not survive. This is beneficial because male mosquitoes DO NOT BITE and the trait for no viable female births is passed down to a limited number of subsequent generations, thus helping to drive down the overall population.

The exact time and location of the trial has yet to be determined, but the current 'Experimental Use Permit' granted to Oxitec dictates trials must be completed by 2022.

Both organizations have committed to extensive community outreach in and around the potential trial locations.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is an invasive species in the Florida Keys. It breeds and thrives in densely populated urban areas where containers of standing water are likely to be found. The female *Aedes aegypti* is the vector for several diseases including: dengue, yellow fever, Zika and chikungunya.

In many areas, including the Florida Keys, *Aedes aegypti* has developed a 'tolerance' for many pesticides, thus making them less effective over time.

Andrea Leal, Executive Director of the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District Said:

"Any approved tools that show promise in helping control this dangerous mosquito are worth examining to the fullest extent. We look forward to working with Oxitec and carrying out this trial as it has the potential to increase effective mosquito control in the rest of the United States."

For more information on the project visit: <https://www.oxitec.com/florida>

To place a service request with FKMCD, visit www.keysmosquito.org or call 305-292-7190.

About the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District

The mission of the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District is to control the mosquito population using the most effective methods, techniques, equipment and insecticides; thus enhancing the quality of life for all residents and reducing the possibility of mosquito transmitted diseases.

Follow FKMCD on Twitter at [@FlKeysMosquito](https://twitter.com/FlKeysMosquito) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FlKeysMosquito). For more information about the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, please visit www.keysmosquito.org.

###