

April 19, 2022

Julie Henderson
Director, Department of Pesticide Regulation

Dear Director Henderson,

We are writing to express our support for Oxitec's Research Authorization application to bring its Friendly™ *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes to Tulare County. In March 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency approved a pilot project in California after comprehensive evaluation of the best available science and consideration of extensive public input. As part of this review, the EPA determined that there are no unreasonable adverse effects for people, animals, or the environment. Collectively, we are charged with protecting millions of residents from mosquito-transmitted diseases and we believe that it is necessary and timely to evaluate innovative solutions to control *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in California.

Mosquito control and public health experts face increasing challenges in controlling disease vectors, especially invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes which pose a significant public health threat. These mosquitoes are becoming increasingly resistant to commonly used insecticides and often lay their eggs in small, cryptic water sources in residential areas which makes inspection and treatment very difficult.

Innovative mosquito control interventions are needed to complement the full suite of Integrated Vector Management tools. There are many different factors that play into identifying the appropriate public health intervention based on disease risk and as such mosquito control agencies need a variety of tools to effectively control disease-transmitting mosquitoes. Invasive *Aedes aegypti* continue to spread in California increasing the risk of transmission of debilitating diseases such as Zika, dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever, and heartworm.

We encourage the Department of Pesticide Regulation to expand evaluation of this innovative technology in California. Approval of Oxitec's Research Authorization will enable the Delta Mosquito and Vector Control District to fully assess the efficacy and control potential in their community. This data is critical as mosquito control experts throughout the country continue to explore the use of additional mosquito control public health interventions.

Sincerely,

American Mosquito Control Association
Delta Mosquito and Vector Control District
Entomological Society of America
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California
Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control Association