

## **Federal judge blocks Florida from further expansion of 'Alligator Alcatraz' immigration detention facility**

### **Florida officials criticize ruling and plan to appeal the preliminary injunction**

### **Florida AG vows to 'fight back' against 'judicial activism' after judge pauses 'Alligator Alcatraz' construction**

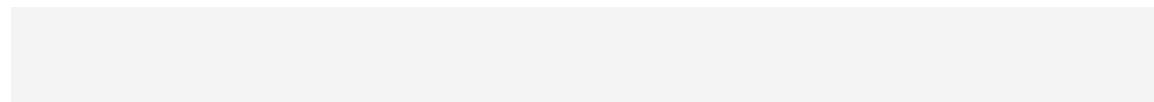
Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier discusses the federal judge who temporarily paused 'Alligator Alcatraz' construction over environmental concerns on 'Fox Report.'



A [federal judge](#) issued a preliminary injunction on Thursday blocking Florida from further expanding the "Alligator Alcatraz" immigration detention center built in the middle of the Florida Everglades.

U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams' injunction formalized the temporary halt she had ordered two weeks ago.

Witnesses continued to testify over multiple days in a hearing to determine whether construction of the facility should stop until the case is decided.



Advocates have argued that the expansion of the facility violated environmental laws.

**In an aerial view from a helicopter, the migrant detention center, dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," is seen located at the site of the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport on July 4, 2025 in Ochopee, Florida. (Alon Skuy/Getty Images)**

Environmental groups and the Miccosukee Tribe said that further construction and operations at the facility should be stopped until state and federal officials complied with environmental laws. Their lawsuit argued that the detention center threatens environmentally sensitive wetlands that have protected plants and animals and that it would reverse billions of dollars in environmental restoration.

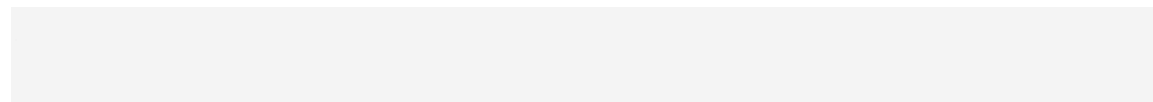
Attorneys for the state and federal governments claimed that the construction and operation of the facility was under the state of Florida despite its use for holding federal detainees, meaning the federal environmental law would not apply.

The judge found that the detention center was at least a joint partnership between the state and federal government.

Williams said she expected the number of detainees in the facility to dip within 60 days through transfers to other facilities, and that fencing, lighting and generators should be removed. She said the state and

federal defendants cannot bring anyone other than current detainees at the facility onto the property.

The order does not halt modifications or repairs to existing facilities, which the judge said are "solely for the purpose of increasing safety or mitigating environmental or other risks at the site."



**An aerial view of a migrant detention center, dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," is seen located at the site of the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Florida on July 7, 2025. (Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty Images)**

The preliminary injunction includes "those who are in active concert or participation with" the state of Florida or federal defendants or their officers, agents or employees, she wrote.

State officials failed to sufficiently explain why the facility needed to be in the middle of the Florida Everglades.

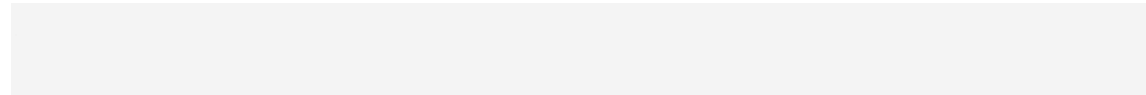
"What is apparent, however, is that in their haste to construct the detention camp, the State did not consider alternative locations," Williams said.

[Florida officials](#) criticized the ruling on Thursday.

"Just this week, a judge in the same district as Judge Williams refused to hear a case because the Southern District of Florida was the

improper venue for suits about Alligator Alcatraz," Jeremy Redfern, a spokesperson for the Florida attorney general's office, said in a statement to Fox News. "Once again, she oversteps her authority, and we will appeal this unlawful decision."

Florida Gov. [Ron DeSantis](#) said the "fix was in" and "we knew this judge was not giving us a fair shake."



"We totally expected an adverse ruling," he told Fox News. "And we also knew we were going to immediately appeal and get that decision stayed. So we will ultimately be successful in this. It's not going to stop our resolve. We're going to continue to do what we need to do to help the Trump administration remove illegal aliens from our country. You know, that's the mandate that they have. So we anticipated this, but I don't think it's going to be insurmountable in the end."

**US President Donald Trump tours a migrant detention center, dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," located at the site of the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Florida on July 1, 2025. (ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP via Getty Images)**

President Donald Trump toured the facility last month and suggested it could be used as a model for future facilities across the country to support his efforts to detain and deport migrants.

The detention center was quickly built about two months ago at a single-runway training airport in the middle of the Everglades. It now holds nearly 500 detainees but was designed to eventually hold up to 3,000 in temporary tents.

The facility's large white tents feature rows of bunkbeds surrounded by chain-link cages. Detainees complained of worms in the food, toilets not flushing, floors flooded with fecal waste and insects everywhere. The air conditioners also sometimes abruptly shut off in the sweltering heat.

Detainees also reportedly go days without showers or receiving their prescription medicine, and they are only permitted to speak to lawyers and loved ones by phone.