PROJECT AND EXPENSE DETAILS

Project Overview

This project began 5 years ago as a way to keep the sargassum off the beaches for what appeared to be obvious reasons (enjoyment of the beach, rental income, etc.) but as the project evolved, we have discovered a huge amount of dangers to our community that sargassum brings, namely:

- Massively reduced turtle nesting when sargassum is allowed to accumulate
- Danger to the sea life from heavy metals, garbage and blocked sunlight
- Substantially reduced tourism negatively affecting the entire community including workers, restaurants, and shops
- Massive beach erosion and beach loss caused by accumulated sargassum berms
- Lowered property values due to declining ROI in the area
- Hydrogen sulfide from rotting sargassum affects the enjoyment of the beach, the health of the workers and full-time residents, and harms electronics

After successfully deploying the barrier in 2023 and then watching the community inconsistently battle the beach accumulation in subsequent years, we determined the best solution was for a “single-payer” beach cleaning strategy. One source was needed for barrier maintenance AND beach cleanup, to make sure it was done consistently and efficiently. And we could use the same crew for beach cleanup AND barrier maintenance.

In the summer of 2025, HMB Sargassum Mitigation Project presented to the North Akumal community an estimate of costs for a unified beach cleanup/barrier solution for 2026. This estimate included:

Barrier Operations

- Repair of the barrier damaged in 2024
- Barrier deployment and removal when necessary
- Divers to repair and maintain anchor points and marker buoys
- Barrier installation and maintenance
- Transportation to and from the storage site
- Labor and boat rental for deployment

Beach cleanup operations

- ATV’s, trailers and sargassum boxes, and other equipment
- Maintenance, operators and cleanup crews (some full-time, some part-time) to safely remove sargassum from beach
- Sargassum loading and removal
- Transportation to the storage site

This estimate of the scope of work came to $210,000 USD. Of course, as with any estimate, it’s impossible to know exact costs or to foresee every difficulty. In the next sections we will get into more detail on expenditures and financial realities.

Funds Raised to Date

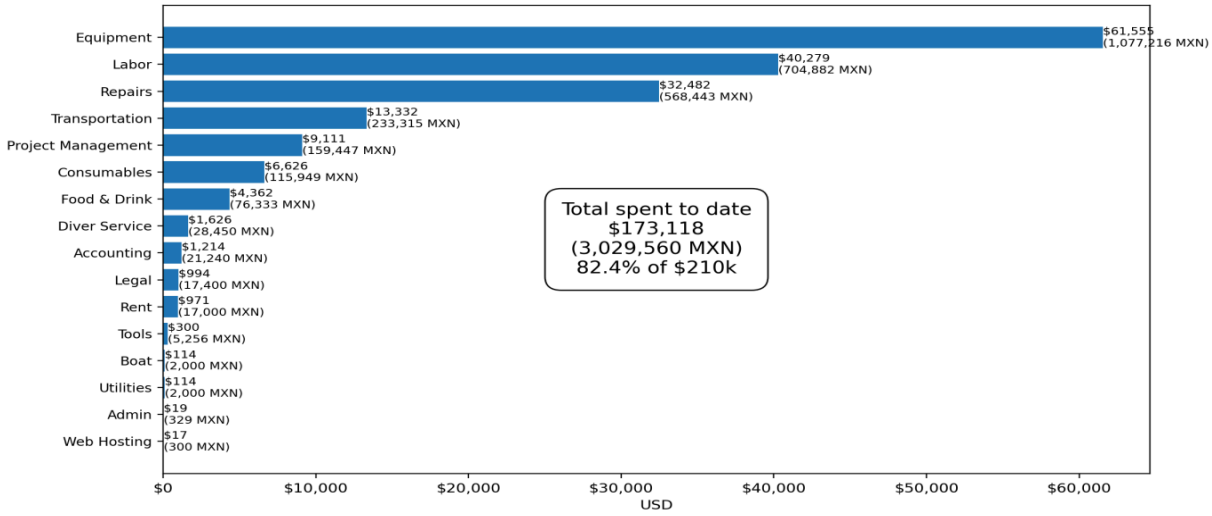
Total amount raised: $180,118

This is about $30,000 less than the necessary budget amount, but we decided the project was important enough to continue, especially given many people said they would contribute if the barrier went in and was successful. This includes approximately $10,000 in payments that were promised, but haven't yet been paid.

While many property owners have contributed generously, many members of the community have not yet participated.

Spending Summary/Major Expenditures

The below chart shows expenditures from October 2025 until April 19, 2026. Spending reflects upfront investments in equipment, labor, materials and project coordination, including the non-budgeted items of the boat and the truck, as well as extra labor for beach cleaning due to the early and severe sargassum onslaught that we didn't expect.



For a breakdown of the "Equipment" and "Repairs" categories, we have:

A. Equipment
- Trailers and sargassum boxes - $25,425
- Boat - $12,856
- Truck - $8,971
- Tools/support equipment/supplies - $6,620
- ATV's - $6,040
- Misc - $1,643

B. Repairs
- Repair parts and shipping/customs - $28,343
- Other repairs (ATV, boat, etc.) - $4,139

Total Spent to Date: $173,118 USD

Sargassum Removed: As of 5/4/26, 1750 cubic meters of sargassum – over two million pounds – has been removed, at approximately ½ to ⅓ the cost of manual cleanup (although some of our operations at the southern end of the bay have been manual out of necessity).

Current run rate without overtime or extra crew: Approx. $3,300 per week (5 days plus ½ day Saturday). This includes the monthly expenses for project management and the crew who cleans the beach and maintains the barrier.

Monthly expenses: Run rate for continuing operations (estimated from historical averages):

	MXN	USD	
Labor	160,000	$9,411.76	
Project Management	23,200	$1,364.71	
Maintenance	30,000	$1,764.71	
Transportation	40,000	$2,352.94	
F&B	30,000	$1,764.71	
Misc	20,000	$1,176.47	
Totals	**303,200**	**$17,835.29**	**($594 per day)**

Operational Reality

These are the factors that have caused cost overruns.

- Our budget was calculated based on the agreement to buy the Tulum barrier, which was not honored by the seller. Not being able to purchase this increased our equipment and shipping costs and necessitated extra labor costs for assembly.
- Increased costs for sargassum removal. Sargassum started early January and was heavy much earlier than in previous years. We also had to hire an extra crew to manually remove sargassum in the southern part of the bay due to blockages. Extra labor was necessary due to the barrier not being in until April.
- Limited access points (one instead of two) increased labor time.
- Increased costs for labor for repairing the barrier to take advantage of the available weather window. We got many volunteers and donated workers from various property managers in the community, but we still had to hire extra people and pay them overtime when necessary.
- Beach cleanup trailers were more expensive than planned because of improvements that were necessary based on our testing.

Funding Outlook

Remaining funds as of 4/28/26: 420,612.01 pesos, or $24,035 (at 17.5:1 conversion). This includes $17,728 reserve funds from previous year contributions. Out of this we need to do important truck repairs and extend the barrier at the north end.

Estimated cost to operate through end of season (end of September) - $85,000. Includes:

- Costs to remove the barrier at the end of the season
- Adding more barrier sections to the north end
- Necessary truck repairs
- This does NOT include refunding Alex Malison $21,000 he has loaned the project

Cash on hand - ~ $24,000 **WHICH EQUATES TO A MAXIMUM OF 30 DAYS OF OPERATING COSTS REMAINING IN THE ACCOUNT.**
Estimated shortfall - $60,965 - not including any unforeseen circumstances

Why Continued Funding Matters

- **Cleaner beach = better owner and guest experience**
  Improves daily enjoyment, usability, and overall satisfaction for residents and visitors.
- **Protects property values**
  Well-maintained shorelines sustain desirability and help prevent negative market impacts. Property values drop when ROI can't be proven.
- **Supports local businesses and tourism**
  Clean beaches attract visitors, benefiting restaurants, rentals, and service providers. We love our favorite restaurants and shops and want to keep them in business!
- **Builds long-term solution capacity**
  Enables investment in better equipment, processes, and sustainable mitigation strategies. The longer we do this, the more impactful and efficient this system becomes.
- **Protects prior investments**
  Preserves the infrastructure, equipment, and progress already funded by the community. Let's not give up now, when we have come so far!
- **Protects the bay and the shoreline**
  Garbage, heavy metals, warmer waters, reduced oxygen, and hydrogen sulfide - all of these things are brought in by sargassum, endangering our very delicate ecosystem.
- **MOST OF ALL - TURTLE NESTING IS IN DANGER!**
  According to CEA, Half Moon Bay Turtle nests for the last three years:
  - **32** in 2025 (when there was very little attempt to clean the beach)
  - **105** in 2024 (low sargassum year)
  - **168** in 2023 (the year the barrier was installed for three months).

Shortfall Details and Consequences if not Funded

We made the decision to move forward with deployment before reaching full funding because many members of the community asked to see proof that the system would work before contributing further.

The results are encouraging: both the beach-cleaning operation and the barrier are performing as designed.

Important: The barrier is doing a fantastic job of deflecting the sargassum, as we expected. The current problem we're having is that due to an unusual current pattern, sargassum is being washed into the bay at the north end. We are making plans to extend the barrier using spare sections that we have, which is another reason we need to continue this project by getting additional funding. We are very sure that while there is still sargassum in the bay, it would be substantially worse if the barrier wasn't in place.

However, two things changed the financial picture:

- **The 2026 season began earlier and more aggressively than expected**, increasing labor and cleanup requirements
- **Final deployment and real-world operation required more materials, repairs, and equipment** than initial estimates

In addition, the project began **$30,000 below the original fundraising goal**, with the expectation that remaining contributions would follow once the system was proven.

Summary of Where We Stand

- Original budget: $210,000
- Total raised: $180,118
- Total carried over from the EPA account 2025: $17,728
- Total spent to date: $173,811
- Cash on hand: $24,035 (420,612.01 pesos - April 28, 2026)
- Remaining cost (through September): ~$85,000

Funding Gap

Based on current projections:

- **Operational Shortfall**: $60,965 (the amount required to finish the 2026 season)

In addition, the project requires a minimum operating reserve to avoid interruptions due to weather, equipment failure, or other unforeseen events.

- **Recommended reserve:** $20,000

Therefore, we are asking for a rounded **$80,000** to ensure we have the funds for operations and emergencies for the rest of the year.

What Happens Without Additional Funding

If funding is not secured by **May 18, 2026**:

- Cleanup operations will be reduced and then stopped
- The barrier will be removed prematurely
- The progress already made will be lost
- The bay will quickly return to heavy sargassum accumulation
- Accumulation will impede turtle nesting and accelerate beach erosion

Why This Matters

A clean, usable beach:

- Supports tourism and local businesses
- Protects property values
- Improves quality of life
- Protects marine life, including turtle nesting

This is no longer a proposal—it is a working system that requires continued support to succeed.

Important: This project exists today because of the incredible expertise, dedication, and thousands of volunteer hours poured into both its design and ongoing management, keeping costs as low as possible for our community. Without that support, the reality is simple: if the community doesn't come together to back it this year, it's unlikely this project will ever return. Relying on external services could put this project financially out of reach, and so far, we haven't found a company willing to take it on. This is a rare opportunity to protect what we love, together, but it depends on all of us.

Call to Action

We estimate there are about 30-40 owners in the high impact zone who directly benefit from this program who have yet to participate. If each of them paid $2500, that would cover the entire rest of the year! Not to mention other owners and business owners in Akumal Norte who will benefit from increased tourism and a healthier bay.

Each of you in the high-impact zone is directly benefiting from this program, and we feel we are demonstrating this program's success.

- We bought beach cleaning equipment, hired crews, obtained access, and arranged for the disposal of sargassum.
- We designed and manufactured special trailers to minimize impact on the beach while cleaning the sargassum up to 3X more effectively and less expensively than wheelbarrow crews.
- We bought a barrier, installed it, and proved that it works.
- We are also meeting needs as they arise - The north-to-south current has been particularly strong this year, and there is more sargassum than usual in the Cozumel Channel. Some of it appears to be entering Half Moon Bay through the gap between the northern end of the barrier and the reef. We are evaluating options to lengthen the barrier in that area to help reduce this inflow.

We have done the hard work to implement this very complicated program, as we said we would do. Despite the costs, we remain one of the most cost-effective programs on the coast. It would be MUCH more expensive if this service was provided by an outside vendor, if one could even be found.

The benefits are shared across the entire bay, and continued progress depends on broader community support.

If we don't receive the necessary funds to continue operations, we will need to discontinue the program and remove the barrier. If we feel funding isn't adequate for a full season's operations next year, we will be forced to discontinue the project altogether and sell off the assets to pay back monies owed. At that point, it would be unlikely that the project would ever be resurrected. The accumulation of sargassum would be such that the bay would be unlivable for significant periods of the year. This would be a tragedy, however, after all the work that has gone into this effort, and with how close we are to achieving our goal!

If you have already contributed, please help us with an additional contribution. If you haven't, please contribute as your neighbors have, or reach out to us with your questions.

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY CONTRIBUTED: Can you contribute 30% more? For condos, $800. For full lots in the HIZ, $5,000. Of course, any amount over what you have already contributed would be helpful.

IF YOU HAVE NOT CONTRIBUTED: We are asking for $2500 USD per condo, or $15,000 per full lot in the HIZ to cover the barrier AND the beach cleanup expenses for the season. Contact us if you want a suggested contribution amount for your low-impact zone property. Of course, any amount you can donate would be helpful. If you still aren't sold on the barrier, can you contribute $1250 to cover beach cleaning?

We need funds by 5/18/26 or we will have to wind this project down.

If we only raise part of the money, we will have to end the project prematurely. If we raise more money than we need, we will roll it over to next year's project.

NOTE: We will also be pursuing other avenues of financing, such as Gofundme, to involve guests who love Akumal, but the majority of the funding needs to come from the owners. This needs to be sustainable year over year. Next year's outlay should be much less than this year's, since we have already purchased a lot of equipment to get this started. For now, let's continue to fund this project and keep building on what we have achieved!

Please DONATE to this vital project. **THANK YOU!**