

Here are comments from members of the HMB Sargassum Project on the email dated May 2nd from the Secretary of Vecinos de Akumal Norte and the email dated May 3rd from the President of Vecinoes de Akumal Norte.:

1. President, Ricardo Manginoe, denigrates members who believe sargassum infestations cause environmental and economic problems by stating we're taking an "*obtuse view*" of the issue. Secretary, Carly Flores, dismisses our concerns about censorship as "paranoid". Our elected representatives should listen to the concerns of ALL members with more respect.
2. Ivan Penie is [a recognized expert on sargassum mitigation](#) but he was not acting as a private citizen when he engaged ZOFEMAT in cleaning our beach. He was acting in his capacity as the paid Project Manager of EcoProteccion Akumal (EPA). Stating this fact is not disseminating propaganda. Propaganda arises from HIDING the fact that Ivan works for EPA.
3. EPA has never misled the community about anything. [The annual report published by the HMB Sargassum Project](#) documents a WIDE RANGE of issues that arose during EPA's initial deployment of the barrier....along with the steps taken to resolve each of these issues.
4. Stating that EPA "has misled" the community is not a neutral statement. And secretly raising money to thwart the HMB Sargassum Project is not maintaining a neutral position on sargassum mitigation. Ricardo must come clean on the legal action he took against the HMB Sargassum Project – without informing any of the Vecinos members directly (and financially) impacted by the lawsuit. He should also publicly share the purported "evidence" he claims to have collected against the project.
5. In December 2023, the Mexican government dispatched two scientific experts to inspect the HMB Sargassum Barrier and determine whether barrier infrastructure might be harming the reef in Half Moon Bay. They found ZERO EVIDENCE of any environmental harm. The lawyer Ricardo hired to thwart the barrier could easily get this report publicly released...but has made no effort to do so. All Vecinos members should call on their president to get this government report publicly released.
6. In addition to serving as Project Manager of EPA, Ivan Penie also participates in an important consortium of scientific and governmental professionals that is working to develop "best practices" in sargassum management. [This "EIMAS" consortium recently published a report](#) that lists sargassum deflection barriers as a recommended sargassum management technologies. The Vecinos board

should let the membership know whether they recognize the validity of this report and the sargassum management techniques it advocates.