


BAL HARBOUR

- V I L L A G E -

OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE MANAGER

LETTER TO COUNCIL

NO. 113-2018

To: Mayor Gabriel Groisman and Members of the Village Council
From: Jorge M. Gonzalez, Village Manager 
Date: July 11, 2018
Subject: **Emergency Cleaning of Accumulated Sargassum Seaweed along Bal Harbour Beach**

The purpose of this Letter to Council (LTC) is to transmit to you information regarding the recent actions taken to address the Sargassum Seaweed accumulation on the northern section of the Bal Harbour Beach near the Baker's Haulover Inlet.

This sargassum seaweed accumulation is a natural occurrence annually and there are many factors such as winds, tidal movement and seawater temperature which influence the volume of seaweed in the Atlantic Ocean which may accumulate on our beach shoreline. The observed volume of sargassum seaweed this year is extremely large with much of the State of Florida and the Caribbean Region experiencing this phenomenon.

The seaweed began heavily accumulating in the Jetty lagoon area behind the Ritz Carlton Hotel on July 2, 2018. This occurs when there is a predominantly southeastern wind which pushes the seaweed into the aforementioned area and traps it there. Since the wind direction did not change for several days, the accumulation of seaweed began to deposit from the Jetty to the shore adjacent to the Oceana Condominium. The majority of the seaweed remained offshore and was prevented from moving onshore due to the existing seaweed accumulation on the shoreline.

On July 9, 2018, the wind shifted direction and returned a large portion of the seaweed back offshore. Due to the state of decomposition of the remaining seaweed on the shoreline, Village staff and the Village contracted beach maintenance service provider Beach Raker, began to remove the remaining accumulation of seaweed from the shoreline with specialized equipment. To date, approximately two hundred (200) cubic yards of seaweed has been collected from the shoreline and placed adjacent to the Jetty to dry. The Village waste management contractor Waste Connections, is currently removing the collected seaweed which is located adjacent to the Jetty. The gathering activity is scheduled to be completed this afternoon and the removal of the collected seaweed is planned to be completed this Friday July 13, 2018.

While it is not feasible to completely remove all of the seaweed that is routinely deposited on the shoreline of Bal Harbour Beach, the recent extra ordinary deposit of seaweed was in place for several days and due to the rate of decomposition of this plant materiel, emergency action was taken. We will continue to monitor this issue for the remainder of the summer and repeat this cleanup as necessary. The news article with video link below provides additional information, concerning the sargassum seaweed issue and details the scale of this event.

<https://weather.com/science/environment/news/2018-06-27-sargassum-seaweed-florida-caribbean>

If you have, any questions please feel free to contact me directly.

JO/JMG