

## Daily strike digest: Angry farmers, unkempt beaches

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- Seven Toronto beaches are temporarily losing their Blue Flag status, which recognizes water safety, services and environmental management. Beaches are certified under the international program based on criteria including washroom facilities on site, frequent garbage collection and weekly water quality tests – which are on hold due to the strike.
- The city will consider providing rebates to offset the suspension of garbage pickup during the strike. As of November, the cost of handling garbage was taken off the property tax bill and converted to a user-pay, volume-based system. The new trash fees appear along with water charges on the utility bill sent to households. "We'll take a look at rebates after the strike, and council will have to make a decision," said city spokesperson Kevin Sack.
- The Toronto Jazz Festival is going ahead in Nathan Phillips Square despite the civic workers strike, while the weekly Wednesday farmers' market is cancelled and will remain so as long as the walkout lasts. Farmers feel they're victims of a double standard. It's not clear why the week-long jazz fest is a go while permits have been cancelled for other events using public space, such as Canada Day celebrations in East York.
- Toronto needs to stay the course in its stance with the city's striking workers, says Toronto Board of Trade president and chief executive Carol Wilding. Settling for the sake of easing short-term inconvenience would be short-sighted, she told reporters yesterday. "If you go to arbitration too quickly or people get caught up in the pressure and the panic, then you lose sight of the fiscal sustainability issue," Wilding said. "From a fiscal sustainability standpoint, if we don't deal with this issue and deal with it now, we're going to have a lot bigger issues."