NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Increase Availability of Drinking Fountains

Implemented
Local Law 55 of 2010

Summary
People buy and consume bottled water and sugary drinks, in large part, because there are not enough easily accessible water fountains. All bottled drinks stress the environment by wasting materials, using energy for transportation, and creating waste.

This law reverses a 2007 change to the Plumbing Code that permitted (fee-based) bottled water dispensers to be substituted for up to half of the required drinking fountains. It requires faucets on all drinking fountains and allows up to 50% of drinking fountains to be substituted by bottle filing faucets.

New Requirements or Changes

Effective: July 1, 2012. These changes do not apply retroactively; they are only triggered when construction activity requires a permit for work covered by this section of the Plumbing Code.

Amendments to Sections 410.1, 410.2 and 410.3 of the Plumbing Code:

• Bottled water dispensers can no longer substitute for drinking foundations.

• Drinking fountains are required to have both a bubbler faucet for drinking and a separate faucet design to full containers at least 10 inches tall.

• Dedicated faucets designed for filling container 10 inches tall can be provided in lieu of up to half the required drinking fountains.

• Restaurants serving water need not install drinking fountains.

Enforcement

These new and revised provisions are a standard part of the Plumbing Code. They will be enforced by the Department of Buildings in the same manner as any other element of the Construction Codes.

Implementation

Drinking fountains and bottle filling faucets may not need to be installed in public restrooms.
The legislation does not define what would qualify as “dedicated plumbing fixtures designed for filling a container at least 10 inches in height.” It is unclear if standard sinks with gooseneck or other tall faucets would qualify.

Special thanks to Hershel Weiss (Ashokan Water Services), member of the NYC Green Codes Task Force Committee on Water Efficiency, for his assistance in preparing this summary.