

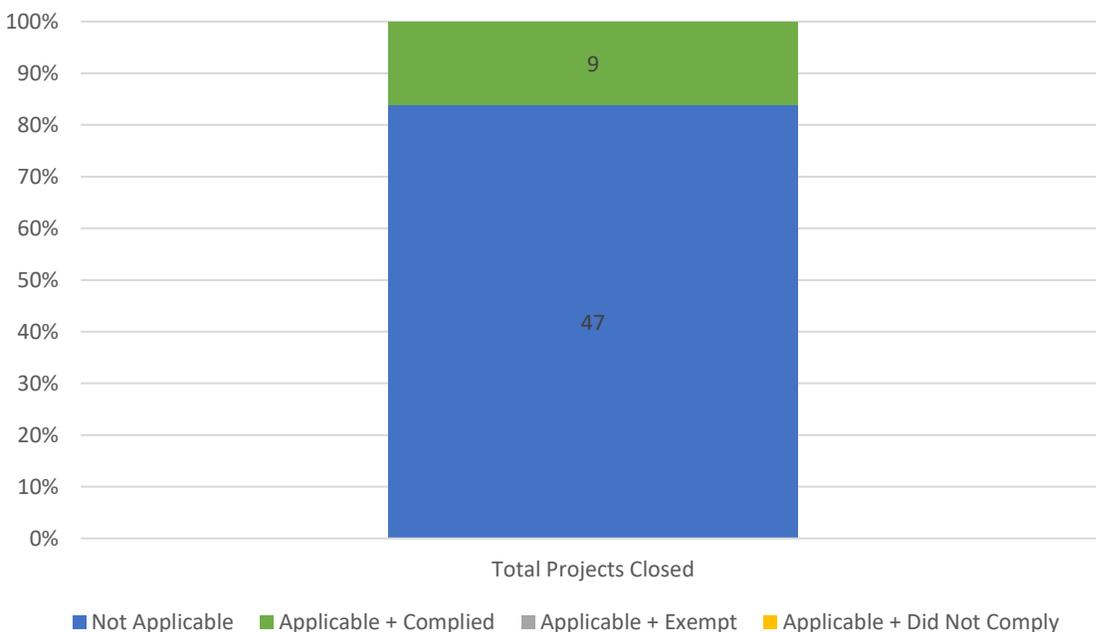
Assessing State Building Compliance via Permit Data

The Rhode Island Office of the Building Code Commissioner maintains an online portal for building permits. At the direction of the Green Buildings Advisory Committee, the Building Code Commissioner pulled data on permits for state projects that closed out in calendar year 2021. This addendum includes findings of that data and discusses how this data should and should not be interpreted.

State Permit Data

The figure below shows that 56 permits were closed out via a letter of completion or certificate of occupancy for projects at state buildings in calendar year 2021. Of those 56 completed projects, nine met the applicability criteria for compliance with the Green Buildings Act. All nine permits indicated compliance with the Green Buildings Act; zero indicated non-compliance. Zero applicable project requested an exemption from the Green Buildings Act.

Figure. Applicability, Compliance, and Exemption of Projects at State Buildings via Permit Data



According to the Green Buildings Act, “[a]ll major facility projects of public agencies shall be designed and constructed to at least the LEED, LEED for Neighborhood Development, and SITES, as provided herein, certified or an equivalent high-performance green building standard” (RIGL §37-24-4(a)). The Green Buildings Act provides the following definitions (RIGL §37-24-3):

"Construction" means the process of building, altering, repairing, improving, or demolishing forty percent (40%) or more of any public structures or buildings, or other public improvements of any kind to any public real property.

"Major facility project" means:

- (i) A building construction project larger than five thousand (5,000) gross square feet of occupied or conditioned space, and its public real-property site; or

- (ii) A building renovation project larger than ten thousand (10,000) gross square feet of occupied or conditioned space, and its public real-property site.

Since there were no exemptions requested, the 47 projects that did not meet the applicability criteria for compliance with the Green Buildings Act were all either minor construction projects (i.e., the building, altering, repairing, improving, or demolishing of *less than* forty percent (40%) of any public structures or buildings) or did not constitute a 'major facility project' (i.e., the building construction project was *smaller than* 5,000 gross square feet or the building renovation project was *smaller than* 10,000 gross square feet).

Interpreting the Data

Similar to data for other public entities, compliance is self-reported; the Green Buildings Advisory Committee did not conduct an independent verification of compliance. The Committee recommends reviewing permitting and reporting processes to determine and implement best practices for annual assessment. This data does not show the compliance paths for applicable projects, though the Committee recommends future reporting include compliance paths. This data also does not show whether projects that did not meet the applicability criteria to comply with the Green Buildings Act did so anyway, though the Committee also recommends including such information in future reports. The Committee's forthcoming study of the Green Buildings Act in 2022 will seek to identify best practices for procedurally ensuring and reporting on compliance with the Act.