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S T A T E O F R H O D E I S L A N D

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- THE GREEN BUILDINGS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, McGaw, Handy, Carson, Boylan, Bennett, and Kazarian

Date Introduced: February 12, 2026

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 37-24-2, 37-24-3, 37-24-4, 37-24-5 and 37-24-6 of the General

2 Laws in Chapter 37-24 entitled "The Green Buildings Act" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **37-24-2. Legislative findings.**

4 It is hereby found and declared as follows:

5 (1) Energy costs for public buildings and public projects are skyrocketing and will likely
6 continue to increase.

7 (2) Energy use by public buildings and public projects contributes substantially to the
8 problems of pollution and global warming.

9 (3) Public buildings, public structures, public real property and public projects can be built,
10 renovated, and located using high-performance methods that are resilient, sustainable and
11 regenerative; that save and generate energy; that reduce and conserve our waters and water
12 consumption; that foster the appropriate use of our lands and buildings; that improve indoor air and
13 environmental quality; that improve water quality; that reduce transportation demand and
14 emissions; that preserve the environment; that make workers and students more productive; and
15 that improve the quality of our individual and shared human experience and environmental justice
16 for all citizens of the state, creating a working continuum of ecology embracing and enhancing the
17 very places and experiences of Rhode Island's heritage, its people, all life, communities, lands, air
18 and waters.

19 (4) The green buildings act is a strategic tool to achieve the greenhouse gas emission

1 reduction targets and other objectives of chapter 6.2 of title 42 ("2021 act on climate") and the work
2 of the executive climate change coordinating council established in § 42-6.2-1.

3 (5) This law is necessary to more efficiently spend public funds.

4 **37-24-3. Definitions.**

5 For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

6 (1) "Construction" means the design and construction process ~~or involved for any new~~
7 building, or for the renovation and altering, repairing, improving, ~~or and/or~~ demolishing ~~forty~~
8 ~~percent (40%)~~ twenty percent (20%) or more of any public structures, public buildings, public real
9 property or other public improvements of any kind to any public structures, public buildings or
10 public real property that are governed by the threshold requirements of "public major facility
11 projects" as defined in this section.

12 (2) "Department", when used without a specific department name, means the ~~department~~
13 ~~of administration~~ state building office, building code commission of the Rhode Island department
14 of business regulation, or any subsequently identified successor to the above "department", or any
15 other subsequently named "department" or any other entity of the state. The department through
16 the state building office, building code commission shall provide staff, other administrative support
17 services, and funding to the green buildings act commission, and shall provide consultation to, and
18 with, the green buildings act commission in order to implement the green buildings act.

19 (3) "Equivalent standard" means a high-performance green building standard, other than
20 LEED certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES
21 certified standard, that provides an independent, third-party verification and certification of a rating
22 system or measurement tool, that, when used, leads to outcomes equivalent to, LEED, LEED for
23 Neighborhood Development, and SITES outcomes, in terms of green building, green infrastructure,
24 and green site performance; current accepted equivalent standards include green globes, Northeast
25 collaborative high-performance schools protocol; or other equivalent high-performance green
26 building, green infrastructure, and green site standards accepted by the green buildings act
27 commission in consultation with the department.

28 (4) "Green buildings act commission" means the appointed entity of public and public
29 agency members, described in § 37-24-5, who shall be responsible for the implementation of the
30 green buildings act in consultation with the department.

31 (5) "LEED certified standard" also, "LEED for Neighborhood Development certified
32 standard", and "SITES certified standard" means the current version of the U.S. Green Building
33 Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating standard
34 referred to as LEED certified, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified, and SITES

1 certified. SITES means the U.S. Green Building Council's SITES — The Sustainable SITES
2 Initiative.

3 ~~(5)(6)~~ "Public agency" means every state or municipal office, board, commission,
4 committee, bureau, department, or public institution of education, or any political subdivision
5 thereof.

6 ~~(6)(7)~~ "Public facility" means any public institution, public facility, public equipment, or
7 any physical asset owned, including its public real-property site, leased or controlled in whole or
8 in part by this state, a public agency, a municipality or a political subdivision, that is for public or
9 government use.

10 ~~(7)(8)~~ "Public major facility project" means:

11 (i) A public facility building construction project ~~larger than~~ ten thousand (10,000) gross
12 square feet or greater of occupied or conditioned space, and its public real-property site; or
13 (ii) A public facility building renovation project ~~larger than~~ ten thousand (10,000) gross
14 square feet or greater of occupied or conditioned space, and its public real-property site.

15 **37-24-4. Green building standards.**

16 (a) All public major facility projects of the state, public agencies, municipalities and
17 political subdivisions shall be designed and, permitted, and constructed to at least the LEED
18 certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified
19 standard, as provided herein, ~~certified~~ or an equivalent high-performance green building standard
20 approved by the green buildings act commission. This provision applies to public major facility
21 projects or other public improvements of any kind to any public facility ~~that have not entered the~~
22 ~~design phase prior to July 1, 2023, for LEED, LEED for Neighborhood Development and for~~
23 ~~SITES~~.

24 (b) All public major facility projects of a public school facility, where the project receives
25 any funding from the state, shall be designed and, permitted, and constructed to at least the LEED
26 certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified
27 standard, as provided herein, ~~certified standard~~, or the Northeast Collaborative for High-
28 Performance Schools Protocol, Version 1.1 or above. This provision applies to public major facility
29 projects or other public improvements by the state or a public school district to any public school
30 facility ~~that have not entered the design phase prior to July 1, 2023, for LEED, LEED for~~
31 ~~Neighborhood Development, and for SITES~~.

32 (c) All public major facility projects described in § 37-24-3 (8) and subsections (a) and (b)
33 of this section, shall comply with this section as a condition precedent in order to apply for and
34 receive a building permit under section 105 permits of the Rhode Island state building code,

1 certification under § 23-27.3-128.0, design and construction procedures, and a certificate of
2 occupancy for that public major facility project in accordance with section 111 certificate of
3 occupancy of the Rhode Island state building code, commercial editions, shall be required to be in
4 compliance with this chapter. This chapter shall hereby be incorporated in the Rhode Island state
5 building code in accordance with RISBC § 23-27.3-100.4 specialized codes incorporated.

6 (d) All public agencies identified in § 37-24-3(6) shall provide the requested and required
7 reports and information to the green buildings act commission for all the public major facility
8 projects described in the statutory requirements of this chapter ("the green buildings act").

9 (e) A public major facility project does not have to meet the LEED certified standard,
10 LEED for Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified standard or an
11 equivalent high-performance green building standard if:

12 (1) There is no appropriate LEED certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood
13 Development certified standard, and SITES certified standard or other high-performance green
14 building standard for that type of building or renovation project or other public improvements of
15 any kind to any public facility. In such case, the ~~department will green buildings act commission~~
16 shall set green building standards that are appropriate to the project.

17 (2) There is no practical way to apply the LEED certified standard, LEED for
18 Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified standard or other high-
19 performance green building standard to a particular building or renovation project or other public
20 improvements of any kind to any public facility. In such case, the ~~department will green buildings~~
21 act commission shall set green building standards that are appropriate to the project.

22 (d)(f) [Deleted by P.L. 2022, ch. 204, § 1 and P.L. 2022, ch. 205, § 1.]

23 **37-24-5. Administration and reports -- Green buildings advisory committee**

24 **Administration and reports -- Green buildings act commission.**

25 (a) The ~~department shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to enforce this~~
26 ~~section by January 1, 2023~~ green buildings act commission shall promulgate such additional
27 regulations as are necessary to enforce this section in consultation with the department. Those
28 regulations shall include how the ~~department~~ green buildings act commission will determine
29 whether a project qualifies for an exception from the LEED certified standard, LEED for
30 Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified standard or equivalent high-
31 performance green building standard, and shall determine the green building standards that may be
32 imposed on projects that are granted exceptions.

33 (b) The ~~department~~ green buildings act commission shall monitor and document ongoing
34 operating savings that result from major facility projects designed, constructed, and certified as

1 meeting the LEED certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified standard,
2 and SITES certified standard, and shall annually publish a public report of findings, addressing the
3 legislative findings of § 37-24-2, and recommended changes in policy. The report shall also include
4 a description of projects that were granted exceptions from the LEED certified standard, LEED for
5 Neighborhood Development certified standard, and SITES certified standard, as provided herein,
6 certified or an equivalent high-performance green building certified standard approved by the green
7 buildings act commission, the reasons for exception, and the lesser green building standards
8 imposed.

9 (c) — (f) [Deleted by P.L. 2022, ch. 204, § 1 and P.L. 2022, ch. 205, § 1.]

10 (g) A green buildings advisory committee act commission shall be created composed of
11 nineteen (19) seventeen (17) members. The advisory committee green buildings act commission
12 shall have eleven (11) nine (9) public members and eight (8) public agency members. Five (5)
13 Three (3) of the public members shall be appointed by the governor; three (3) two (2) of the public
14 members shall be appointed by the president of the senate; and, three (3) two (2) of the public
15 members shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. One of the public
16 members shall be appointed by and represent the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. One of the public
17 members shall be appointed by and represent the Rhode Island league of cities and towns.

18 (h)(1) The governor, the speaker of the house, and the president of the senate shall make
19 the following seven (7) appointments representing accordingly as stated with the appointees initial
20 terms of service:

21 (i) Governor: one from general construction contracting, three-year (3) term; one at-large
22 citizen from the urban municipalities of Providence, Cranston, Warwick, Pawtucket, Woonsocket,
23 or Newport, two (2) year term; and one at-large citizen from the other thirty-two (32) municipalities
24 in the state, two-year (2) term;

25 (ii) Speaker of the house: one from architecture, three-year (3) term; one from planning,
26 two-year (2) term;

27 (iii) President of the senate: one from engineering, three-year (3) term; one from landscape
28 architecture, two-year (2) term.

29 (4)(2) The eleven (11) nine (9) public members of the advisory committee green buildings
30 act commission shall be composed of nine (9) representatives who are involved in and have
31 recognized knowledge and accomplishment in their respective professions, of high-performance
32 green building standards, relating to the standards set forth in § 37-24-4. The public members shall
33 include one from each of the following fields: architecture, engineering, landscape architecture,
34 energy planning, labor through the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, general construction contracting,

1 ~~building product and building materials industries who are involved in, and have recognized~~
2 ~~knowledge and accomplishment in their respective professions, of high performance green~~
3 ~~building standards, relating to the standards set forth in § 37-24-4;~~ in addition to ~~two (2)~~ three (3)
4 additional public members, one public member representing the Rhode Island league of cities and
5 towns; one at-large citizen public member representing an urban municipality from Providence,
6 Cranston, Warwick, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, or Newport, and one at-large citizen public member
7 representing the other thirty-two (32) municipalities in the state in order to ensure geographic
8 diversity.

9 ~~(2)~~(3) The ~~advisory committee~~ green buildings act commission shall have eight (8) public
10 agency members representing personnel from affected public agencies, ~~and cities and towns~~, that
11 oversee public ~~works~~ buildings, public structures, and public real property projects and workforce
12 development, who shall be appointed by the directors or chief executive officers of the respective
13 public agencies which shall include the department of administration; the department of
14 environmental management; the department of education; the department of transportation; the
15 department of labor and training; the department of health; the office of the state building code
16 commissioner; and the Rhode Island infrastructure bank, ~~and the Rhode Island League of Cities~~
17 ~~and Towns~~.

18 ~~(3)~~(4) The chairperson of the green buildings ~~advisory committee~~ act commission shall be
19 a public member chosen by the green buildings ~~advisory committee~~ act commission.

20 ~~(4)~~(5) Of the initial ~~eleven (11)~~ nine (9) public members, ~~six (6)~~ three (3) shall serve three-
21 year (3) terms and ~~five (5)~~ four (4) shall have two-year (2) terms. ~~Each appointing authority shall~~
22 ~~appoint two (2) public members to three year (3) terms with the remainder of the public member~~
23 ~~appointments serving two year terms. Thereafter, all public members shall be appointed to three-~~
24 ~~year (3) terms.~~

25 (i) The three (3) appointees from architecture, engineering, and general construction
26 contracting shall each have a three-year (3) term of service with a maximum of three (3) terms of
27 service.

28 (ii) The two (2) appointees from landscape architecture and planning, shall each have a
29 two-year (2) term of service, with a maximum of two (2) terms of service;

30 (iii) The two (2) at-large citizen appointees from the urban municipalities, and the at-large
31 citizens appointees from the other thirty-two (32) municipalities shall each have a two-year (2) term
32 of service, with a maximum of two (2) terms of service;

33 (iv) The two (2) appointees from the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and the Rhode Island league
34 of cities and towns shall each have a two-year (2) term of service, with a maximum of two (2) terms

1 of service;

2 (6) Upon the effective date of this section, the current public members of the green
3 buildings advisory committee shall continue their service on the green buildings act commission
4 until reappointed or when replacement appointments are made by the appointing authorities.

5 (7) The chairperson of the green buildings advisory committee shall be a LEED Accredited
6 Professional with a specialty in building design and construction (LEED AP BD+C), and shall have
7 current Rhode Island professional registration in architecture, engineering, or landscape
8 architecture, and with said credentials shall have the ability to continue as the chairperson for the
9 green buildings act commission for a maximum of three (3) three-year (3) terms of service in order
10 to establish the direction and implementation of this chapter across the state and its municipalities.

11 (8) With, and in, any given appointments by the appointing authorities, there shall not be
12 appointments made for the public members which would constitute more than one-third (1/3) of the
13 total nine (9) public members of the green buildings advisory commission. The chairperson of the
14 green buildings advisory commission shall annually inform the appointing authorities of the
15 makeup and constituencies of the green buildings advisory commission, and provide
16 recommendations to that effect.

17 (h)(i) The green buildings ~~advisory committee~~ act commission shall:

18 (1) Make all determinations for the implementation of and compliance with the green
19 buildings act;

20 (2) Make recommendations regarding an ongoing evaluation process of the green buildings
21 act to help assist the department and the executive climate change coordinating council implement
22 this chapter and to achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and other objectives of
23 chapter 6.2 of title 42 ("2021 act on climate");

24 (2)(3) Identify the needs, actions, and funding required to implement the requirements set
25 forth in this chapter, in achieving high-performance green building projects for our public
26 buildings, public structures, and our public real properties;

27 (3)(4) Establish clear, measurable targets for implementing the standards, defined in this
28 chapter, for all public major facility projects including timeline, workforce needs, anticipated costs
29 and other measures identified by the green buildings ~~advisory committee~~ act commission and
30 required by chapter 6.2 of title 42 ("2021 act on climate"); and

31 (4)(5) Identify ways to monitor and document ongoing operating savings and greenhouse
32 gas emission reductions that result from public major facility projects designed, constructed and
33 certified as meeting the LEED certified standard, LEED for Neighborhood Development certified
34 standard, SITES certified standard, Green Globes, Northeast Collaborative for High-Performance

1 Schools Protocol, Version 1.1 or above and annually publish a report to the general assembly and
2 the executive climate change coordinating council of findings and recommended changes in
3 policy:⁶

4 (6) Shall have the authority to establish subcommittees appointed by the chairperson to
5 further the implementation of this chapter, and the chairperson of the green buildings act
6 commission shall have the authority to appoint the chairperson and the members of the
7 subcommittees, whereas each subcommittee shall have at least one member of the green buildings
8 act commission serving on each of the appointed subcommittees;

9 (7) Shall have the authority to promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of
10 this chapter, and shall have the authority to establish bylaws for the governance of the green
11 buildings act commission;

12 (8) Shall collaborate with the executive climate change coordinating council regarding the
13 implementation of this chapter including, but not be limited to, the establishment of the
14 benchmarking requirements, technical assistance, building owner needs, outreach and education,
15 opportunities for funding related to this chapter, the implementation of state policies, programs,
16 and statutes related to this chapter and recommendations for building performance standards; and

17 (9) Shall have the authority to identify, pursue, apply for, and receive funding from any
18 public, private, nonprofit entity or any other organization or private citizen.

19 ~~(j)~~ All public agency requests for proposals, requests for information, requests for bids,
20 requests for design/build, requests for construction managers, and any requests relating to obtaining
21 the professional services, pricing, and construction for public major facility projects by a public
22 agency for a public facility, shall prominently include the notice of the statutory requirements of
23 this chapter ("the green buildings act") at the beginning of such requests.

24 ~~(k)~~ The green buildings ~~advisory committee act commission~~ shall have no responsibility
25 for, and shall not develop requests for proposals, requests for information, requests for bids,
26 requests for design/build, requests for construction managers, and any requests relating to obtaining
27 the professional services, pricing, and construction for major facility projects by a public agency
28 for a public facility; and the green buildings ~~advisory committee act commission~~ shall have no
29 responsibility for, and shall not select any vendors for any requests for proposals, requests for
30 information, requests for bids, requests for design/build, requests for construction managers, and
31 any requests relating to obtaining the professional services, pricing, and construction for major
32 facility projects by a public agency for a public facility. Nothing shall prohibit public members of
33 the green buildings ~~advisory committee act commission~~ from responding to, and being involved
34 with, any submittals of requests for proposals, requests for information, requests for bids, requests

1 for design/build, requests for construction managers, and any requests relating to obtaining the
2 professional services, pricing, and construction for major facility projects by a public agency for a
3 public facility.

4 **37-24-6. Protection from liability.**

5 No person, corporation, or entity shall be held liable for the failure of a public major facility
6 project to meet the LEED [certified standard](#), LEED for Neighborhood Development [certified](#)
7 [standard](#), and SITES certified standard or other standards established for the project as long as a
8 good faith attempt was made to achieve the standard set for the project.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- THE GREEN BUILDINGS ACT

1 This act would create the green buildings act commission to consist of seventeen (17)
2 members, responsible for the implementation of the green buildings act in consultation with the
3 state building office, building code commission of the Rhode Island department of business
4 regulation.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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