

# ***ANALYSIS OF HB 1744***

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**House Agriculture & Ecology Committee**  
**17, 1999**

**February**

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Allows lake levels to be regulated when fewer than ten landowners abut on a lake.
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## **BACKGROUND:**

Ten or more landowners abutting on a lake may petition the superior court of the county in which the lake is situated for an order to provide for the regulation of the outflow of the lake in order to maintain a specified lake level. The court is required to hold a hearing and to hear testimony on all sides of the issue. If the order is granted, the court shall also direct the Department of Ecology to regulate and control the outflow of the lake so as to maintain the lake level.

Current law does not provide for state funding to install control devices for lake levels, although some funds are available for flood control.

Orders to control lake levels may be requested only on meandered lakes. A meander- is a term used when lands in Washington were originally surveyed. Lands were sold in blocks of forty acres, but when a lake or other water body was situated on the land, the block would be short of forty acres and would extend to the meander line. Because these meander lines were established during the nineteenth century, it is likely that some no longer reflect the boundaries of lakes.

## **SUMMARY:**

When there are fewer than ten owners abutting on a lake (i.e., nine or fewer), a majority of the owners (i.e., five or more) are authorized to petition a superior court for an order fixing the water level. The term meander- is deleted.