

Meteorite Export Ban Proposed in Duma

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Chelyabinsk area resident showing what he thinks are meteorite fragments. **Andrei Romanov**

The State Duma has proposed adding Chelyabinsk meteorite fragments to the federal list of items banned from being exported, a news report said Thursday.

Duma deputies believe that the export of meteorite fragments could prevent Russian scientists from properly analyzing the space rock, thereby impeding Russian science overall.

Alexei Chepa, deputy head of the Duma's Science and Technology Committee, told Izvestia that although "meteorites don't fall that often, it is nevertheless imperative to stipulate in the [relevant] law that their export abroad is prohibited."

He added that the committee would review options for amending current legislation next week.

Current law bans export of items of "cultural value" but does not mention rock fragments from space.

Viktor Grokhovsky, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences' commission for meteorites and the International Meteorite Society, told the daily that some fragments had already ended up abroad.

"If Western scientists publish the results of the Chelyabinsk meteorite's analysis first, it will affect the prestige of Russian science," he said.

Fragments of Chelyabinsk meteorite are available for purchase on various websites for between 1,000 and 16,000 rubles (\$30-\$525).

The meteorite that crashed in the Chelyabinsk region on Feb. 15 weighed about 10,000 tons and measured about 17 meters in diameter. It disintegrated after entering the Earth's atmosphere and exploded above the Chelyabinsk region, causing panic and injuring more than 1,500 people.

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