

# Albert Lea Tribune Editorial: Suburbs are like sucker plants

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Sucker plants.

They are what the suburbs of Minneapolis and St. Paul are acting like.

Republican legislators from the metro suburbs these days want to end local-government-aid disbursements to Minneapolis and St. Paul. And they want to hoodwink freshman Republicans from Greater Minnesota into believing it's a good idea.

They would be wrong.

The suburbs wouldn't exist if it weren't for the strength and brilliance of Minneapolis and St. Paul leaders and residents over the decades to build two strong metropolitan economies.

Frankly, the only things that built the suburbs were freeways and highways. And when the suburbs were in their youth and lacked clout, did Minneapolis and St. Paul push through annexation legislation, as indeed happened in some other states? No. The big trees allowed the sucker plants to grow and grow.

But the farmers know this lesson. The suckers plants always want to kill the trees that gave them life in the first place.

In some other states, large cities are able to keep their sucker plants in check because annexation legislation favors them. It's a bargaining chip.

Cutting LGA for Minneapolis and St. Paul is merely yet another attempt at ending the successful LGA program.

The sucker plants don't like it because LGA is an equalization formula meant to keep property taxes down. Places with high property values — like the suburbs — contribute the pool, while places with lower property values — like Albert Lea or Cloquet or Minneapolis — receive funding.

Suburban legislators go around telling outright lies about what the funding is used for, saying it is for luxury items like fountains and statues.

The truth is, the funding helps the livability of these regional centers — the places people gather to work and play. Hosting visitors — whether you are the heart of a metropolitan area or a rural regional center — costs money. Many people drive into Albert Lea every day, then leave the city at night, whether to work or to enjoy activities and gatherings. The same goes for Minneapolis.

The funding people for police, fire, snow removal, summer recreation programs, libraries, transportation and other needs of a city.

It has become frustrating for people in Greater Minnesota and in Minneapolis and St. Paul to see increasing property taxes, industrial taxes and fees and yet have fewer services — all thanks to the annual barrage the suburban leaders make on local government aid.

Granite Falls Mayor Dave Smiglewski said it best last week in a conference call: "Minnesota is one state and we succeed or fail based on whether we work together."

Perhaps when the people of the suburbs realize this, we can start returning Minnesota to where it needs to be. Perhaps they will elect legislators who care more about the state as a whole than their own overgrown sucker plants.