all accounts, getting things across the island by road is impossible. Radar and navigation systems at the airports are down. The transportation mechanism of the island is literally ripped apart. So potable water, food, and fuel are impossible to move where they need to go. That state of affairs is inadequate and unacceptable in America in 2017.

Electricity and power are disrupted across the island. What will be done to restore power and electricity throughout the island? What will be done to make sure that diesel is available there and in the Virgin Islands? Many of the machines essential for lifesaving at the hospitals cannot be powered by generators alone. That state of affairs is inadequate and unacceptable in America in 2017.

All five of the hospitals in Arecibo, one of Puerto Rico's largest cities, are without power. Many other hospitals are shuttered as well. Clinics are closed.

Mosquito-borne diseases are a real and present danger. Deadly ailments in contaminated food and water may cause serious and possibly deadly diseases. As these diseases spread, what is the plan to stop this kind of inadequacy? It is unacceptable in America in 2017.

As to communications, or the basic ability to talk to each other, to reassure each other, and to know what is going on with relatives and loved ones and friends—no wonder that angst and alarm are spreading beyond Puerto Rico to Connecticut, where those relatives and friends live now—this kind of lack of communication is unacceptable in America in 2017. What is the plan to correct it?

On public safety, looting and theft are becoming more prevalent. As the days drag on, law and order will deteriorate unless public safety is addressed more effectively.

There is another kind of challenge. A dam that is about to burst and could cause havoc in surrounding areas is a clear and present safety danger that illustrates again the weakness of Puerto Rico's infrastructure.

Towns throughout the island have suffered severe flooding. So housing and basic shelter are inadequate. What is the plan to rebuild?

Payment for medicines cannot be made unless cash is available, and the lack of electricity means that the ATM machines are not working. If there is no cash for residents to buy basic goods, including food and water, how does the administration plan to solve this problem? This kind of inadequacy is unacceptable in America in 2017.

Rebuilding will require a long-term commitment. It will require a plan and a strategy, not just over the next 24 hours or 24 days but 24 months and longer. It must deal with a financial situation that is a storm of its own.

As I described it yesterday, this storm is not a natural disaster. It is a manmade disaster, the result of healthcare and tax programs that are beyond any fault of the people of Puerto Rico. It is not of their doing.

Vast swaths of resources have been swept away in Puerto Rico, including many of the attractions important for Puerto Rico's tourist industry. The same is true, for example, on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands. Tourism is a key component of Puerto Rico's economy. It may take years and possibly decades to restore. What is the long-term plan? What is the strategy for Puerto Rico and for the Virgin Islands? There needs to be a kind of Marshall Plan for rebuilding because the devastating damage done is no less than what Europe suffered as a result of World War II. We have an obligation—certainly, no less than rebuilding our European allies—to restore and rebuild Puerto Rico.

All of these natural disasters and the financial manmade storm come as Puerto Rico continues to endure the struggles of its internal financial commitments that are necessary for the lifeblood of the economy. Jobs and economic progress must be the end goal.

With so many questions about the President's plan or lack of plan, I am struck by the need for this body and this Congress to take the initiative. I think we will need to begin action, begin hearings, and begin a process of building a plan if the administration fails to present it.

I believe, too, that we share so much with the island of Puerto Rico in people who have come to Connecticut and other parts of the country that we will find a ready and enthusiastic audience and support for such an effort.

In the past 2 days, after silence through much of it about Puerto Rico, the President seemed to blame the island itself, its financial struggle, other storms, and even the size of the ocean. There should be no excuses. There must be a call to action.

I thank the Coast Guard, our military, the first responders, the rescuers, and relief organizations—from Americares to the Red Cross to Save the Children—that have devoted so much and given so much in these times of crisis. They have been stretched thin. They have performed with courage and generosity and so have the donors who have come forward in Connecticut and around the country. People are calling my office asking what they can do for the people of Florida and the gulf coast and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They are all fellow Americans, and we owe it to them to do more and do better to make sure that we keep faith with our fellow Americans.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to talk about this subject.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. President, I want to express as well my concern regarding the renomination of Ajit Pai to be Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I will oppose his nomination. As much as I respect his background and his achievements, his intelligence and ability, I believe that, during his tenure over the past year, he has taken one step after another that is contrary to the public interest. He has launched an attack on net neutrality, and he is working adamantly for undoing the open internet order.

The open internet order was established based on 10 years of evidence about how the internet has changed, and it was most recently fully upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in June 2016. The most recent evidence shows that net neutrality has not inhibited network investment at all, in contrast to Chairman Pai's claim.

On broadband privacy, Chairman Pai forcefully advocated in support of efforts to rescind the FCC's broadband privacy rules, a blatant attack on consumer privacy rights—all the more striking in light of recent dramatic concerns about privacy. Signing up for the internet should not mean that you have to sign away your rights to privacy, and that is why it is so important to have baseline privacy and data security rules that our broadband providers subscribe to, observe, and follow.

Earlier this year, Senate Republicans gave broadband providers a green light to sell sensitive personal information to the highest bidder—a move that came with cheers of support from Chairman Pai. By supporting this measure, I think Chairman Pai raised severe doubts about his commitment to the average American consumer.

One of Chairman Pai's first actions after his designation as chairman was to direct the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau to overturn an order designating nine wireless companies to provide lifeline broadband service through the USF Lifeline Program, despite the assertion that his foremost goal was to close the internet and digital divide. I strongly criticized this decision and led a letter to Chairman Pai expressing that this action not only forfeits and affects these providers consumers' interests, but it may also have a chilling effect on other broadband providers that were interested in participating in the Lifeline broadband program. This action would limit choice and increase the cost of service for the lifeline participants.

Finally, as Chairman of the FCC, Mr. Pai has a duty to review whether Sinclair's proposal to acquire Tribune Media complies with the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules and serves the public interest by promoting localism and diversity. Rather than scrutinizing this deal as closely and carefully as I believe he should, Mr. Pai has focused his efforts on loosening restrictions to enable the deal. This transaction not only blatantly violates existing rules, but it also abridges existing FCC policy. Those policies were just recently scrapped under Mr. Pai's watch.

This action can only be explained by interest in prioritizing the demands of Sinclair over the public interest. It also is no surprise that this decision happened just days before he had a meeting with the chairman of Sinclair.

Every market impacted by this megamerger would experience a reduction in responsive local news due to Sinclair's unresponsive, top-down approach—denigrating diversity, diminishing our already distorted civic discourse, and devaluing local voices of women and people of color. Today, I sent a letter to Chairman Pai to let him know that blessing a media behemoth such as Sinclair-Tribune would reflect an abject failure on his part to protect the public interest and to uphold the FCC's duty to promote localism and diversity. Localism needs responsiveness to local interests, local news, and local voices. That is a trust the FCC has by its own rules and as a matter of public interest.

Today we rely more than ever on the internet for so many facets of our everyday life: freedom of expression, education, healthcare, housing, entertainment, and more. Consumers need a champion that will be their voice at a time when so often the public interest is drowned by moneyed interests and special interests.

Chairman Pai, far from our champion, seems to be more a servant of those interests. American consumers deserve better. My hope is, the President will nominate someone who can better serve those interests.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Massachusetts.

DELRAHIM NOMINATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, our economy is in trouble. In markets all across our economy, a few giant corporations hold all the power. It is everywhere. Four airlines control over 80 percent of all domestic airline seats in America. Five health insurance giants own over 80 percent of the health insurance market. Four companies dominate over 80 percent of the beef market. Three drugstore chains control almost all retail pharmacies in the country. Two companies sell more than 70 percent of the beer in America.

As competition has been snuffed out in industry after industry, big corporations have made out like bandits, and everyone else has paid the price. How do we pay? American families shell out more for lower quality goods. Small businesses find it harder and harder to compete against the big guys. Innovators and entrepreneurs struggle to promote new ideas that can change the world. Income inequality has left more American families struggling to make ends meet as the top 1 percent has grown even richer and richer. As fewer companies have seized more economic power, they have translated their economic muscle into political power—power they can use to elect the politicians they like, get the kinds of laws and policies they like, and run up even more economic power.

It is a nasty, self-perpetuating cycle, and it is exactly why Congress created antitrust laws over a century ago. Back then, like today, a few powerful companies were stifling competition in markets all across the economy and gaining extraordinary political power. Congress decided to create laws to break up trusts and protect competition.

Today the Justice Department's Antitrust Division is charged with protecting competition by blocking anticompetitive mergers and going after companies that engage in illegal conduct. For decades, though, antitrust enforcers have put their tools on the shelf instead of aggressively enforcing our antitrust laws, they have given the green light to megamerger after megamerger and allowed big corporations to misuse this power without a peep.

That problem is set to get worse in the Trump administration. Since taking office, President Trump has loaded his administration with a Who's Who of former lobbyists, Wall Street insiders, and corporate executives committed to tilting the scales even further in favor of his powerful friends and against American families.

Now, President Trump has nominated someone to head the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. His nominee, Makan Delrahim, will be in charge of determining whether there is someone to stand up for competition or let the big guys just get bigger and more powerful. Unfortunately, Mr. Delrahim's approach to antitrust enforcement is based on a hands-off economic theory that just leaves big corporations to do pretty much whatever they want to do. Case in point, just last year, when asked what he thought about the proposed merger of AT&T-Time Warner—a merger that would combine two of the most powerful companies in media—Mr. Delrahim said he didn't think it was a ''major antitrust problem.''

Mr. Delrahim spent over a decade working to convince government officials that other megamergers weren't antitrust problems. During the airline merger wave that left us with only four major carriers, Mr. Delrahim was lobbying the government to approve a merger between US Airways and Delta. Despite the fact that there are only a few large retail pharmacies, he lobbied to get government approval for CVS's proposed takeover of Caremark. Even though only five health insurers control the vast majority of the health insurance market, he tried to convince government regulators to approve Anthem's unsuccessful attempt to merge with Cigna.

Now he wants to take a spin through the revolving door and regulate the industries he worked to make even less competitive. For the giant corporations, wealthy individuals who want to amass more power and profits for themselves, Mr. Delrahim is a dream candidate, but he is also a dream candidate for President Trump. President Trump has not been shy about his willingness to use his power against individuals or companies he doesn't like, and he has made it clear that he expects his agency heads to carry out his orders.

Mr. Delrahim has been a loyal supporter of President Trump's since the campaign. He urged fellow Republicans to support President Trump because he correctly believed President Trump would appoint a pro-corporate Justice to the Supreme Court. He also served as legal counsel to President Trump after he was sworn in and as the President reversed rules that made it easier for families to pay their mortgages or reversed rules to prevent people with serious mental illnesses from buying guns or reversed rules to stop companies from dumping toxic waste into water. As head of the Antitrust Division, Mr. Delrahim will be in a position to make even more harmful decisions.

It is no secret that Americans don't trust Washington. They see politicians who care more about catering to corporate donors than fighting for the interests of hard-working people who are trying to figure out how to pay the bills and build a little security in their own lives. It is a real problem, but it is a problem we can solve. We can begin to solve it by fighting the economic concentration that is putting more money and more power into the hands of a few giant corporations. That means choosing enforcers who will hold companies accountable when they break the rules, and that means rejecting nominees like Makan Delrahim.

TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. President, I rise to speak on the nomination of Heath Tarbert, who has been nominated by President Trump to be the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets and Development. If confirmed, Mr. Tarbert will be in charge of the Treasury Department's role on a multi-agency body called the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which reviews whether foreign acquisitions of a U.S. company would pose a threat to our national security and then makes recommendations to the President on whether the President should block the transaction.

This is not about whether foreign investment benefits our economy. Of course it does. The United States is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment, and our markets attract the world's best talent and capital. Going back to the 1990s, only four foreign acquisitions of American companies have ever been blocked by a President based on a recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. This is about whether our national security is put at risk when foreign governments, foreign state-owned enterprises, and foreign investors acquire our companies and assets. This is also about foreign governments and the companies they own,