

Tucker (00:00):

Ron DeSantis is of course the governor of Florida. He is watching all of this very, very intensely. He has declared a state of emergency in Florida tonight. He joins us right now. Governor, thank you very much, uh, for coming on. You're seeing the bigger picture here. How would you assess Florida right now?

Gov. DeSantis (00:19):

Well, Tucker, this is a major, major storm. I mean, it hit at 155 miles an hour. That is one tick below a category five. Uh, but unlike some of the category five storms we've had, this is a huge storm in terms of its size. Uh, it brought record, storm surge and Collier, Lee counties, and it's continuing to churn throughout the state. And so, you know, you're gonna end up with many more people without power. Uh, obviously in southwest Florida, as soon as the storm passes, you know, we have, uh, emergency responders at the local level. The state has marshalled hundreds of aircraft. We have high, uh, water vehicles. Uh, we have the capacity to go by air, by land, or by sea to help people. And we will do that. Uh, and that's gonna need to need to take place. Uh, but then you're gonna have a, a major effort to restore power.

Gov. DeSantis (01:11):

Uh, we have a hundred cell towers that we can help stand up to help do communications. We have over 42,000 linemen and other personnel associated with restoring power. If you're driving anywhere in Florida, I10, I95, you see these trucks coming into the state and it's been ongoing. So that's gonna be the biggest probably logistical effort in the history of the state. As soon as it's safe to go in, they're gonna go in, try to get, of course, rescue people first, uh, then try to stabilize the situation, restore power, get fuel in there and make sure people can communicate.

Tucker (01:46):

So the storm came ashore in southwest Florida, Lee, Charlotte counties in there. It's hard to know exactly what's going on there. You would know how bad does it look the damage, do you think?

Gov. DeSantis (02:00):

Well, I think it's clearly the biggest flood event we've ever seen in that part of the state. Um, and that's not just Lee and Charlotte that would be Collier, and you had massive, massive storm surge. You have places in, in those counties that have massive standing water. That of course presents a lot of hazards on the back end. I mean, we've been telling folks be, be careful once the storm goes past. You know, in hurricane Irma, Tucker, I had the folks pull the numbers. There were seven deaths directly caused by Hurricane Irma. There were 77 deaths caused in the aftermath for things like down power lines or misusing generators. So that's gonna be a major, major disaster in terms of some of the structural damage. I think it's too soon. We're getting some intermittent reports, but it's really gonna have to pass. We're gonna have people out there at the local and state level assessing the damage. Uh, but my sense is I think it's gonna be one of the biggest flood events, uh, we've ever had. What remains to be seen is just how much damage the wind did, obviously is very significant. Um, but as you know, Tucker, in that part of Florida, you know, a lot of those buildings that are built are built specifically to withstand a category five hurricane. And so we'll see Florida building codes. How did they hold up? Um, and hopefully they held up okay.

Tucker (03:17):

When a natural disaster like this strikes a state. It is, it is common. It's, I think it's always the case that the state receives federal aid, given how politicized things are at the moment. Are you confident you're gonna get the federal support Florida needs?

Gov. DeSantis ([03:34](#)):

So I actually spoke with the president and he said here, he wants to be helpful. So we did submit a request for reimbursement for the next 60 days at a hundred percent. Uh, that's a significant, uh, support, but it's a significant storm. So we haven't heard back from it. But I'm actually cautiously optimistic that we do. I mean, as you say, Tucker, we live in a very politicized time. But you know, when people are fighting for their lives, when whole livelihood is at stake, when they've lost everything, uh, if you can't put politics aside for that, uh, then you're just not gonna be able to. So I'll work with anybody who wants to help the people of Southwest Florida and throughout our state.

Tucker ([04:11](#)):

Amen. That's the spirit. Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida, thank you very much for taking the time. Appreciate it.

Gov. DeSantis ([04:17](#)):

Thanks.