To: Friends throughout the United States
From: The Growth Dilemma Project of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Re: An Invitation to Participate in a Quaker Witness Network

June, 2011

The Growth Dilemma Project (GDP) of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has grown out of a project on Friends Testimonies and Economics that began in 2003, and has developed as a response to a Yearly Meeting Minute of 2009 about the intersection of ecology and the economy. The project’s purpose is to nurture understanding about the failures of our current economic system, and to promote new thinking about the design of our economic institutions.

The project has two components:

- Asking Friends in our Yearly Meeting to become familiar with a) the societal problems that our growth economy is worsening rather than solving, b) explanations for why this is happening, and c) proposed alternatives. We expect this will unleash new energy among Friends at many levels.

- Developing a wider network of Friends, based on our Core Principles (on the other side of the page), to help promote a national dialogue about the failures of our current economic system, and about ways to move toward an economy based on justice and reverence for life. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US AS A PARTICIPANT IN THIS WIDER NETWORK OF FRIENDS.

Accompanying this invitation is an Interest Questionnaire which is also on the PYM website. Please fill it out and return it by e-mail to eddreby@gmail.com or by p-mail to Ed Dreby, 14 New Jersey Av, Hainesport NJ 08036. For more information relating to the Project, please see the GDP web page at www.pym.org

From now until mid-September, we hope to hear from a number of Friends who will be the initial participants in this wider Friends network. Using the Interest Questionnaire, we will assemble a group of 6 to 8 network coordinators from various yearly meetings who will function primarily through internet and conference phone calls. Essential to our success is that a member of the coordinating group be able to provide leadership and oversight for internet communications.

During this same period of time we will draft short summaries of key points about five main themes: concentration of wealth, inadequate job opportunities, consumption and debt, vulnerable populations, and vital ecosystems. We intend these to be useful within our Yearly Meeting and for the wider Friends network.

If establishing the network proves feasible, we suggest the following initial steps be considered:

- Consulting with the Administration’s Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Initiatives about the role that a grassroots faith-based movement for a just and sustainable economy might best play;

- Asking Friends in other yearly meetings to examine the failures of our growth economy and to communicate with the FCNL Policy Committee about the need to address the growth dilemma;

- Engaging with other progressive faith-based policy organizations, to help build an interfaith movement and constituency for fundamental economic reform;

- Visiting young policy professionals, especially in DC, to talk about the problems our current system is worsening rather than solving, and to nurture new ideas in the minds of those who will help shape future policy.

Our Project’s main purpose is to initiate conversations about fundamental problems with our economic system that are not now taking place among our policy-makers. While the key points about our themes may be applicable to particular legislative opportunity, what we think is most needed is to nurture seeds of understanding, doubt, and new ideas within the Society of Friends, with prospective faith-based allies, and in the minds of those with access to policy-makers.

In faith,

Steve Loughin, Clerk

Ed Dreby, Network Convener